UConn women stay home

Huskies open NCAA Tournament against Mercer at Gampel Pavilion. **Sports, Page 1**

UConn men a 5 seed

Huskies open NCAA Tournament against New Mexico State in Buffalo. **Sports, Page 1**

Tom Brady unretires

Buccaneers QB says he'll be back for his 23rd NFL season after all. **Sports, Page 1**

Sunny and mild

Sunshine, turning warmer; high of 52. **Sports, Page 8**

Hartford Courant

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Feds eye Bulkeley High School project

Investigators looking for irregularities in state spending

By Edmund H. Mahony
Hartford Courant

Federal investigators have subpoenaed records from Hartford and questioned a city engineer about a school construction project during which the city claims it was "required" by the state office financing the construction to hire two consultants to perform much the same work.

The grand jury subpoena is another on a growing list issued by federal prosecutors looking for possible irregularities in more than a billion dollars in state spending, most of it since 2018 under a program that finances public school construction across the state.

The state is financing almost all of the cost of multiple school projects in Hartford, but investigators have zeroed in on the $150 million overhaul of Bulkeley High School on the city's southside, according to public records and interviews with more than a half-dozen people familiar with the project.

In particular, the investigators appear interested in whether Konstantinos Diamantis, the politically-influential former director of the state school financing program, persuaded Hartford to hire a second consultant and how that consultant, Construction Advocacy Professionals, was awarded the contract even though two competitors submitted lower bids.

Diamantis was deputy secretary of the state Office of Policy and Management and closely involved in school construction as the hands-on director of the Office of School Construction Grants Review — until Gov. Ned Lamont ousted him from both positions in late October, about a week after federal prosecutors served the state with a wide-ranging subpoena for spending records.

No charges have been filed.

The subpoena for state records demands more than three years of email and other electronic communications involving Diamantis. It

Turn to Grand jury, Page 2

WAR IN UKRAINE



Volunteers Jeff Kastner, from left, Zenon Szahay and Stephan Ochrim pack goods bound for Ukraine at the Ukrainian National Home in Hartford. **MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT**

Donations pour in, bound for Ukraine

Overwhelming outpouring of aid in Hartford could fill 4 tractor trailers

By Kenneth R. Gosselin
Hartford Courant

The first donations collected at Hartford's Ukrainian National Home are now bound for war-ravaged Ukraine in a shipping container the size of an 18-wheeler tractor trailer.

And there are enough items — ranging from medical supplies and snacks for the military to clothing, blankets and candles for civilians — to fill three more containers.

"It's unbelievable the support that we have gotten from Connecticut," Peter Gluch, a national home board member and a coordinator of the effort, said Saturday. "We did not expect this at all. We just can't take any more items."

What the national home can use are monetary donations to help pay shipping costs, at $2.50 a pound, or $26,000 for each container.

So far, the donations from the community have covered the first shipment, now on its way from New Jersey to a hub in Poland. From there, the items will be transported by truck into Ukraine.

The national home is on its way to raising enough money for a second container, and it also has incurred the cost of renting pods to store donations until more can be shipped.

"Every single space in this building was filled with boxes," Gluch said. "I'm just

Turn to Donations, Page 3



U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, second from left, visits with Ukrainian refugees in Poland over the weekend.
SEN. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL/COURTESY

Blumenthal sees refugees' misery

Senator taking trip to Poland as part of bipartisan foursome

By Christopher Keating
Hartford Courant

HARTFORD — On a three-day trip to Poland, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal said Sunday that he saw misery and desperation in the eyes of Ukrainian refugees as they were fleeing their homeland from constant bombings and shelling by Russia.

On Sunday, bombs landed within 15 miles of the border crossing where Blumenthal had visited earlier with fellow senators as part of a bipartisan American delegation.

"One of our clear takeaways from this is the urgency of providing more military support — whether planes like the MiG29s or anti-aircraft batteries or drones to give

Turn to Blumenthal, Page 3

35 killed in missile strike on base

Military facility in western Ukraine is near Polish border

By Yuras Karmanau
Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine — Russian missiles pounded a military base in western Ukraine on Sunday, killing 35 people in an attack on a facility that served as a crucial hub for cooperation between Ukraine and the NATO countries supporting its defense. The barrage marked an escalation of Moscow's offensive and moved the fighting perilously close to the

Turn to Strike, Page 3



Ukrainian soldiers take cover from incoming artillery fire Sunday in Irpin, a city on the outskirts of Kyiv. **FELIPE DANA/AP**

New Britain arson suspect ID'd

A suspect faces arson charges in fires at two houses of worship in New Britain. Kimorah Parker is accused of setting fires at a synagogue and a Catholic Church. **CONNECTICUT, PAGE 1**

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FROM PAGE ONE

Grand jury

from Page 1

also directs the state to search specifically for records associated with Construction Advocacy Professionals, known as CAP; its owner, Antonietta DiBenedetto-Roy; and Diamantis's daughter, Anastasia. Roy hired Anastasia Diamantis at her father's request, according to public records and other sources.

In addition to gathering records from the state and Hartford, the grand jury has issued subpoenas for records of school projects in at least two other towns, Tolland and Bristol. Diamantis was involved in both projects. In Tolland, several officials there have complained he used his authority over state financing as leverage to persuade the town to hire DiBenedetto and another contractor, D'Amato Construction, for an elementary school project.

Hartford will not discuss its subpoena, nor a subpoena to city engineer Frank Dellaripa, who was ordered to appear before the grand jury earlier this month and interviewed by federal investigators. Dellaripa could not be reached; others said the city has retained a lawyer for him.

Several Hartford officials said Diamantis pitched the idea of hiring a second consultant early in 2020 as what he suggested could be a long-term cost-saving measure. At the same time, they said he was critical of Arcadis/O&G/C&R, the joint venture Hartford hired a decade earlier as manager for its broader school building and renovation program.

Diamantis's idea, the officials said, was to hire a smaller construction administrator solely for the Bulkeley project. His thinking, they said, was that a smaller, presumably nimbler and more efficient project manager could identify savings overlooked by a manager with a broader portfolio of projects. Diamantis also promised that the state would pick up the cost of the second consultant.

The Hartford officials said Diamantis did not suggest hiring CAP or even mention the firm, but one official said he referred to Roy more than once as a model for the kind of smaller consultant he had in mind. What's more, one official said, Diamantis said Roy's firm was woman-owned and that "it would be good if she could get a toehold on some of these projects."

Most Hartford officials, wary of being drawn into a federal investigation, would not discuss Diamantis, his former Office of School Construction Grants Review, or CAP. Those who did would do so only in general terms.

"I had a conversation with the state of Connecticut Office of School Construction Grants Review regarding ways to save costs for the school construction program," said Melvyn Colon, who chaired the Hartford School Building Committee in 2020.

"This included an idea from OSCGR regarding the hiring of construction administrators to oversee management costs, instead of a typical construction management process, which provides comprehensive services of high quality but can be very costly. Eventually, this idea gained enough traction for implementation at the Bulkeley High School project, with the understanding that the state would pay for it."

Others said Diamantis not only wanted, but required the city to hire a second consultant. Since Diamantis's office was reimbursing Hartford for almost all its construction costs, the city's school building committee paid attention — especially when he agreed to pick up the cost of an additional consultant.

"Since the state is largely responsible for the funding of school construction projects, the committee followed the requirement of the state official responsible for school construction that the city hire an additional owner's representative," said Jesse Sugarman, senior advisor for Strategy and Institutional Advancement for Hartford Public Schools. "As has been previously reported, the committee was given assurances by that state official that those costs would be largely reimbursed."

Mayor Luke Bronin said earlier this year that, "Since the state covers the overwhelming share of school construction costs, the city's school building committee gave a great deal of deference to the state official in charge of school construction — including his direction that an additional owner's representative should be hired to oversee project costs, at the state's expense."

One Harford official closely involved in the school building process said Diamantis compared his idea of hiring an additional, but smaller, construction administrator to an experiment in cost savings, with the city being the laboratory. If it saved money, it could be used elsewhere.

In February 2020, the Hartford School Building Committee instructed its existing consultant, Arcadis/O&G/C&R to prepare a request for proposals and solicited bids from firms competing to become construction administrator for Bulkeley High School job. It got four responses.

Records show that the bids ran from about $1.3 million to about $4.1 million. CAP bid about $2.4 million but revised that down to about $2.2 million before the close of bidding in March 2020.

During what's known as a scope review process, when the school building committee and staff analyze bids and compare them against requirements of the job, CAP was told it had included in its bid the cost for a position — an assistant project manager/engineer — that wasn't needed. The city told CAP it could remove the position if it chose, allowing for a more "apples to apples" comparison with proposals from competing bidders

CAP dropped the line item, cutting another $526,000 from its bid and reducing the total to about $1.77 million. There were still two lower bids, $1.3 and $1.74 million.

A Hartford official familiar with the bid and review process said a subcommittee of the school building committee narrowed the choice to two finalists: CAP and the slightly lower bid of $1.74. The official said CAP was hired because, in the subcommittee's view, the company appeared best suited to complete the work and it was a woman-owned business, an important criterion in a city that strives for minority representation in contracting.

After Diamantis left his state jobs, the state rescinded his promise to Hartford to reimburse it for costs associated with hiring CAP because the state "will not reimburse any project for more than one construction administrator." Hartford fired CAP after paying about half the cost of the contract for work already performed.

Some Hartford officials defended Diamantis's work in the city. They said he could be blustery and abrasive with contractors who he suspected of wasting money, but spent long hours on Hartford projects and appeared sincerely interested in the city schools, which he thought have been shortchanged by past state spending decisions.

Norm Pattis, Diamantis's lawyer, said he would like to meet with federal prosecutors and explain how he ran the construction financing office.

"The grand jury is supposed to protect people's reputations from unwarranted speculation," Pattis said. "The U.S. Attorney's office knows people are talking about it, and it won't talk to us. So we extend the same offer to them that we have all along. Pick up the phone and call. We are not afraid to talk."

In an hourlong radio interview on WTIC-AM last week, Diamantis defended his work, saying he never pressed towns to hire particular contractors and arguing that all of his decisions were designed to save money. He referred specifically to the Bulkeley High School project, saying his decision to include administrative offices in the rebuilt school saved Hartford hundreds of thousands of dollars.

He suggested the grand jury investigation is political and the result of a rift with the Lamont administration.

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LOTTERY
Sunday, March 13

PLAY3 DAY
2 7 1 **WB:** 6

PLAY4 DAY
0 1 2 6 **WB:** 3

The late lotto numbers were not drawn in time for this edition. For results, please visit courant.com/lottery.

SATURDAY'S LATE NUMBERS

PLAY3 NIGHT
4 9 0 **WB:** 5

PLAY4 NIGHT
4 8 7 2 **WB:** 8

CASH 5
14 17 24 28 34

LUCKY FOR LIFE
3 4 6 21 23 **LB:** 16

POWERBALL
19 20 37 39 61 **PB:** 8 **PP:** 2

Tuesday's est. Lotto jackpot: $1.4 million

Tuesday's est. Mega Millions jackpot: $22 million

Wednesday's est. Powerball jackpot: $124 million



FROM PAGE ONE

Lamont, residents attend vigil to support Ukraine

By Lori Riley
Hartford Courant

WEST HARTFORD — Vladimir Rozvadovskiy was born in Ukraine and has lived in West Hartford for the last 20 years. He has many family members in Ukraine.

Sunday afternoon, Rozvadovskiy was joined by a few hundred people at a vigil for the embattled country, including Gov. Ned Lamont, Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz and West Hartford Mayor Shari Cantor, among others, in front of the West Hartford Town Hall.

"We're here to support Ukrainians fighting for their freedom and their homeland," Rozvadovskiy said. "This was a very surprising attack on our country. I don't think anyone expected it. This is an atrocity that's happening, and we want it to stop as soon as possible. We want governments to understand they need to continue to pressure [Russian President] Vladimir Putin."

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia is entering its third week, with over 2 million refugees having left the country, causing a humanitarian crisis. Thousands of Ukrainians are believed to have been killed.

Rozvadovskiy said many of his family members are still in Ukraine, but five family members were able to leave and arrived in Connecticut last Monday to stay with his family.



Lt. Gov. Susan Bysewicz said the state and its people stand with Ukraine and listed several organizations through which people can help. **STEVE SMITH/COURANT COMMUNITY**

"A lot of us are from the west," he said. "Part of my family is in Ivano-Frankivsk. A lot of bombs have been going off this week, but otherwise they're pretty safe.

"We're thankful that Poland is opening up their borders, but it just stinks people are having to leave their homes and they may not have a place to come back to, and that's just chilling to think about."

Cantor read a statement from Sen. Richard Blumenthal, who is in Poland with a group of senators to assess the situation and see how the U.S. and Connecticut could help.

Myron Kolinsky of Wethersfield, the organizational coordinator of the Ukrainian National Home of Hartford, said that one tractor trailer truckload of donations dropped off at the Ukrainian Home left for Poland via New Jersey last week and another load is set to leave March 24.

"Last Monday, we had a lot of residents who provided food, clothing, medical supplies for the airlifts," Kolinsky said. "We're very grateful to our neighbors; we're overwhelmed."

Kolinsky's parents came from Ukraine following World War II to Hartford, where they were married in 1952.

"They were displaced persons; they were refugees; they were forced out during World War II," said Kolinsky, who still has cousins in Ukraine. "My mother was 10 in 1944. They were evacuated from their village. They burned the village down, which is kind of what's happening today.

"What's happening today, the humanitarian crisis, is similar to what my parents went through."

Lori Riley can be reached at lriley@courant.com.

Donations

from Page 1

happy to be able to see the floor again."

Dozens of volunteers scurried around the basement of the national home Saturday, a fixture on Wethersfield Avenue since 1965, the sound of packing tape being ripped off rolls and slapped on boxes as the constant backdrop.

Mike Laflair, a volunteer with no tie to Ukraine except the upset he felt watching the destruction unfold from his West Hartford home, first came last Sunday to donate cat food.

"I saw the devastation on TV, and I had to do something," Laflair said. "Then when I was driving home, I said, 'I've got a couple hours, and I've been back every day since.' "

Gluch estimates that since the collection started a week ago, thousands of volunteers, the majority of them from outside national home membership, have helped with sorting, packing and loading into storage containers.

How quickly the next shipping container from Hartford will be bound for Ukraine isn't clear, Gluch said.

Shipping companies are overwhelmed by the volume of donations, Gluch said, not just from every U.S. state but from around the globe.

The national home also is now looking for a nearby place to temporarily park storage pods until future shipments can be arranged. And the organization is asking the public to visit http://ukrainiannationalhome.org/support-ukraine or its Facebook page for daily updates to cut down on the 200 calls a day the national home has been fielding since the start of the collection.

How to help

To help fund shipping costs, there are two ways to donate: checks for tax-deductible gifts can be written to UAYA Hartford with "Ukraine Humanitarian Aid Fund" in the memo. If a tax deduction isn't sought, checks can be written to Ukrainian National Home with "Ukrainian Relief" in the memo. Both may be sent to Ukrainian National Home, 961 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford, 06114, Attention: Cathy.

Gluch, the son of Ukrainian immigrants who came to America in the late 1940s, said he is worried about the safety of relatives still in the country, mostly in western Ukraine.

"When I see a Facebook message, I say, 'OK, they are OK.' " Gluch said.

Gluch, who grew up in Hartford and now lives in West Hartford, said he had hoped one day to visit Ukraine, but he now wonders when — or if — that will be possible.

The assault by Russia is the latest in a series of conflicts in which Ukraine has had to assert its right to independence, Gluch said.

"It's history repeating itself in many ways," Gluch said. "We make progress, and it goes backwards. We make progress, and it goes backwards."

Kenneth R. Gosselin can be reached at kgosselin@courant.com.



Destruction is seen March 7 following shelling in Khariv, Ukraine's second-largest city. **SERGEY BOBOK/GETTY-AFP**

Strike

from Page 1

Polish border.

The attack so near a NATO-member country raised the specter that the alliance could be drawn into the fight and was heavy with symbolism in a conflict that has revived old Cold War rivalries and threatened to rewrite the current global security order.

More than 30 Russian cruise missiles targeted the sprawling facility, which has long been used to train Ukrainian soldiers, often with instructors from the U.S. and other countries in the Western alliance. Poland is also a transit route for Western military aid to Ukraine, and the strikes followed Moscow's threats to target those shipments.

Since their invasion more than two weeks ago, Russian forces have struggled in their advance across Ukraine, in the face of stiffer than expected resistance, bolstered by Western weapons support.

Instead, Russian forces have besieged several cities and pummeled them with strikes, hitting two dozen medical facilities and leading to a series of humanitarian crises.

The U.N. has recorded at least 596 civilian deaths, though it believes the true toll is much higher, and Ukraine's Prosecutor General's office said that at least 85 children are among them. Millions more people have fled their homes amid the largest land conflict in Europe since World War II.

Talks for a broad cease-fire have thus far failed, but the Kremlin's spokesman said another round would take place on Monday by videolink, according to Russian state news agency Tass.

Meanwhile, President Joe Biden is sending his national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, to Rome to meet with senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi amid concerns that the Beijing government is amplifying Russian disinformation and may help Moscow evade punishing Western economic sanctions.

On Sunday, The New York Times reported that Russia asked China to give it military equipment and support for the war in Ukraine after the invasion Feb. 24, according to U.S. officials.

Russia has also asked China for additional economic assistance, to help counteract the battering its economy has taken from broad sanctions imposed by the United States and European and Asian nations, according to an official.

U.S. officials, determined to keep secret their means of collecting the intelligence on Russia's requests, declined to describe further the kind of military equipment Moscow is seeking. The officials also declined to discuss any reaction by China to the requests.

The attacked training base near Yavoriv is less than 15 miles from the Polish border and appears to be the westernmost target struck during Russia's 18-day invasion.

The base has hosted NATO drills and a senior official, Adm. Rob Bauer, previously hailed it as embodying "the spirit of military cooperation" between Ukraine and international forces.

As such, the site is a potent symbol of Russia's longstanding concerns that the expansion in recent years of the 30-member Western military alliance to include former Soviet states threatens its security something NATO denies.

Still, the perceived threat from NATO is central to Moscow's justifications for the war, and it has has demanded Ukraine drop its ambitions to join the alliance.

Lviv governor Maksym Kozytskyi said most Russian missiles fired Sunday "were shot down because the air defense system worked."

Those that got through killed at least 35 people and wounded 134, he said.

Russian fighters also fired at the airport in the western city of Ivano-Frankivsk, which is less than 94 miles north of Romania and 155 miles from Hungary, two other NATO allies.

NATO said Sunday that it does not have any personnel in Ukraine, though the U.S. has increased the number of American troops deployed to Poland.

Sullivan said the West would respond if Russia's strikes travel outside Ukraine and hit any NATO members, even accidentally.

Biden "has been clear, repeatedly, that the United States will work with our allies to defend every inch of NATO territory and that means every inch," Sullivan said on CBS News' "Face the Nation."

The city of Lviv, in western Ukraine itself, has been spared the scale of destruction unfolding to its east and south.

Its population of 721,000 has swelled during the war with residents escaping bombarded population centers and as a waystation for the nearly 2.6 million people who have fled the country.

Ukrainian and European leaders have pushed with limited success for Russia to grant safe passage to civilians trapped by fighting, though Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said authorities have managed to evacuate nearly 125,000 people from combat zones.

Blumenthal

from Page 1

Ukraine a better means of air defense," Blumenthal said in a telephone interview Sunday from Poland. "These bombings today emphasize the urgency of providing this immediate assistance because [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's air superiority is enabling him to slaughter and terrorize the Ukrainian people.

"As valiant and as skilled as the Ukrainian fighters are on the ground, they need more Javelin and Stinger missiles to counter the tanks and the artillery, as well as the aircraft. They need more effective means of air defense. They need more Javelin missiles to fight the tanks. They have proved enormously effective. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have a clear to-do list when I go back to colleagues this week, and I will be telling them what we've seen and heard."

The biggest problem Sunday was the Russian missiles that hit a military post in western Ukraine, killing 35 and wounding about 135 others. As the war in Ukraine continues and the resistance remains strong, the Russians are now asking China for military equipment, American officials said.

Blumenthal remained with the delegation in Poland and did not enter the war zone in Ukraine to directly witness the damage.

"Our ever-vigilant security would not allow us to cross the border," Blumenthal said. "The authorities didn't want us to go anywhere near the site. We didn't see the destruction. We were 12 miles away. But we met refugees, and we talked to Polish authorities who were there at the time."

On a bipartisan trip with three other U.S. senators, Blumenthal met with troops from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, including some from Connecticut. They also met at the American embassy with U.S. Ambassador Mark Brzezinski, the son of former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and brother of television journalist Mika. The ambassador "is working ably to assure that we and our NATO allies are solidly united in support of Ukraine," Blumenthal said, adding, "Our standing strong together is Putin's worst nightmare."

The delegation included Sen. Roger Wicker, a Mississippi Republican who serves on the Armed Services Committee. They traveled with Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat, and Sen. Rob Portman, an Ohio Republican. The same foursome had traveled to Ukraine in January over the Martin Luther King weekend.

In a picture tweeted by Blumenthal, the four senators could be seen serving hungry refugees through the World Central Kitchen that provides meals across the globe under often-difficult circumstances on an emergency basis.

In an ongoing battle against Ukrainian civilians that has included the bombings of a maternity hospital and nursery schools, Putin should be prosecuted as a war criminal, Blumenthal said.

The Polish people "are now coming to the aid of Ukrainian victims because of Vladimir Putin's absolutely savage, ruthless, criminal invasion," Blumenthal said. "The more I have seen and heard from eyewitnesses to Putin's terrorist campaign, the more convinced I am that he should be held accountable as a war criminal."

That would be done at the International Criminal Court at The Hague in the Netherlands.

"In the real world, the chances of Vladimir Putin being apprehended and tried may seem remote, but it is an important part of the picture to understand that what he has done constitutes war crimes," Blumenthal said.

As part of the trip, the four senators spoke with refugees who described "gut-wrenching stories" about fleeing their homeland as the war rages, he said. More than 2 million refugees have fled Ukraine with many headed west to Poland — and the total could eventually reach millions more.

"They are terrified, grief-stricken and deeply anxious about their future," Blumenthal said. "It's on their faces, in their voices, and the tears are so moving and powerful."

Republican Robert Hyde, one of five candidates seeking the party's nomination to run against Blumenthal in November, said Blumenthal should not have traveled to Poland and dismissed the trip as a series of photo opportunities.

"Wasting fuel, resources and polluting the environment when he could've done this ... on Zoom," Hyde said. "Couldn't it be done on Webex, satellite phone or whatever satellite devices the government utilizes for classified communications?"

Blumenthal declined to comment on Hyde, saying politics could be discussed later during the campaign as the candidates head toward the November election.

"This bipartisan trip," Blumenthal said, "put us on the ground in a very moving and powerful way to see and hear refugees and visit with American troops, as well as diplomats and Polish officials and report back to my colleagues so that America can provide more and better assistance to the courageous, determined freedom fighters of Ukraine."

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WAR IN UKRAINE

Experts warn refugees vulnerable

Fears rise traffickers may exploit exodus of women, children

By Stephen Mcgrath
Associated Press

SIRET, Romania — One man was detained in Poland suspected of raping a 19-year-old refugee he had lured with offers of shelter after she fled war-torn Ukraine.

Another man was overheard promising work and a room to a 16-year-old girl before authorities intervened.

Another case inside a refugee camp at Poland's Medyka border raised suspicions when a man was offering help only to women and children. When questioned by police, he changed his story.

As millions of women and children flee across Ukraine's borders in the face of Russian aggression, concerns are growing over how to protect the most vulnerable refugees from being targeted by human traffickers or becoming victims of other forms of exploitation.

"Obviously all the refugees are women and children," said Joung-ah Ghedini-Williams, the UNHCR's head of global communications, who has visited borders in Romania, Poland and Moldova.

"You have to worry about any potential risks for trafficking — but also exploitation, and sexual exploitation and abuse. These are the kinds of situations that people like traffickers look to take advantage of," she said.



Women tend to children as they sit with their possessions Sunday at a train station in Warsaw, Poland. **CZAREK SOKOLOWSKI/AP**

The U.N. refugee agency says more than 2.5 million people, including more than a million children, have fled war-torn Ukraine in what has become an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Europe and its fastest exodus since World War II.

In countries throughout Europe, including the border nations of Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, private citizens and volunteers have been greeting and offering help to those whose lives have been shattered by war.

From free shelter to free transport to work opportunities and other forms of assistance — help isn't far away.

But neither are the risks.

Police in Wroclaw, Poland, said Thursday they detained a 49-year-old suspect on rape charges after he allegedly assaulted a 19-year-old Ukrainian refugee he lured with offers of help over the internet.

The suspect could face up to 12 years in prison for the "brutal crime," authorities said.

"He met the girl by offering his help via an internet portal," police said in a statement. "She escaped from war-torn Ukraine, did not speak Polish. She trusted a man who promised to help and shelter her. Unfortunately, all this turned out to be deceitful manipulation."

Police in Berlin warned women and children in a post on social media in Ukrainian and Russian against accepting offers of overnight stays, and urged them to report anything suspicious.

Tamara Barnett, director of operations at the Human Trafficking Foundation, a U.K.-based charity that grew out of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking, said that such a rapid, mass displacement of people could be a "recipe for disaster."

"When you've suddenly got a huge cohort of really vulnerable people who need money and assistance immediately," she said, "it's sort of a breeding ground for exploitative situations and sexual exploitation. When I saw all these volunteers offering their houses, that flagged a worry in my head."

Human trafficking is a grave human rights violation and can involve a wide range of exploitative roles. From sexual exploitation, such as prostitution, to forced labor, from domestic slavery to organ removal, and forced criminality, it is often inflicted by traffickers through coercion and abuse of power.

A 2020 human trafficking report by the European Commission, the EU's executive branch, estimates the annual global profit from the crime is $32 billion. It says that sexual exploitation is the most common form of human trafficking in the 27-nation bloc and that nearly three-quarters of all victims are female, with almost every fourth victim a child.

Madalina Mocan, committee director at ProTECT, an organization that brings together 21 anti-trafficking groups, said there are "already worrying signs," with some refugees being offered shelter in exchange for services such as cleaning and babysitting, which could lead to exploitation.

"There will be attempts of traffickers trying to take victims from Ukraine across the border. Women and children are vulnerable, especially those that do not have connections — family, friends, other networks of support," she said.

At the train station in the Hungarian border town of Zahony, 25-year-old Dayrina Kneziva arrived from Kyiv with her childhood friend.

Fleeing a war zone, Kneziva said, left them little time to consider other potential dangers.

"When you compare ... you just choose what will be less dangerous," said Kneziva, who hopes to make it to Slovakia's capital of Bratislava with her friend. "When you leave in a hurry, you just don't think about other things."

Anti-war protests across Europe take aim at Putin

Rights group: Police in Russia arrest over 650 amid crackdown

By Frank Jordans
Associated Press

BERLIN — Tens of thousands of people rallied Sunday in cities across Europe to protest against Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, with small vigils taking place in Russia as well despite a crackdown by authorities against such demonstrations.

German trade unions called a protest in Berlin, where sunny weather boosted the turnout. The march led from the city's Alexanderplatz — a large square named after Russian Tsar Alexander I — to a site near the Brandenburg Gate.

Many participants carried flags in the blue and yellow colors of Ukraine, while others bore banners reading "Stop the War" and "Peace and Solidarity for the people in Ukraine."

Norbert Herring, who held up a sign that read "What are you doing to your neighbor?" as the crowds filed past the Russian Embassy, said the images from Ukraine reminded him of the bombing of cities during World War II.

Several participants at the Berlin protest said they were Russians ashamed about what their country was doing.

"We're against this war so we wanted to show our solidarity," said Aleksandra Belozerova, a Russian studying in Germany. "It's the least we can do in this situation."

Her friend, Aliia Biktagirova, held a sign with letters for the Russian phrase for "No War" represented as asterisks to reflect the censorship she said is taking place in Russia concerning the conflict.

In Russia, where demonstrations against the war in Ukraine have been typically met with a heavy police response, rights group OVD-Info said more than 668 people had been detained in 36 cities Sunday.

There was a heavy police presence at central locations including Manezhnaya Square near the Kremlin, with officers carrying demonstrators away to waiting police vans, in footage posted by Russian media. The number of people protesting nationwide appeared to be far fewer than the last major protests a week ago, when OVD-Info listed more than 5,000 people who were detained.

Anti-war protests were also held in London, Warsaw, Poland, and the German cities of Frankfurt, Hamburg and Stuttgart.

A small far-right party organized a protest in Serbia's capital, Belgrade, in support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The occupants of dozens of cars waved Russian and Serbian flags, honked horns and chanted slogans in favor of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Some cars had "Z" painted on them — the letter is used on Russian armored vehicles in Ukraine and is now a symbol of support for Russian troops.

Despite formally seeking European Union membership, Serbia has refused to join international sanctions against its ally Russia despite voting in favor of the U.N. resolution condemning Moscow's aggression. The country's dominant state-controlled media carry frequent pro-Russia reports about the war.

One day after rallies in Florence and Naples, Italians and Ukrainians who live in Italy turned out for protests in Milan and Rome on Sunday against the war in Ukraine.

In the first row of a march in Milan, protesters held bloodied cloth bundles to represent children killed in Russian attacks on Ukrainians. Some children held drawings, and many marchers streaked their cheeks in the colors of the Ukrainian flag.



Thousands of marchers demonstrate Sunday in Berlin against Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. Anti-war protests were also held in London, Rome and Warsaw. **THOMAS LOHNES/GETTY**

Before the march, protesters stretched out a rainbow-colored peace flag in a Milan square.

In Rome's march, one of the participants held a sign that read "Close the Sky," an apparent reference to Ukraine's plea to NATO to establish a no-fly zone over Ukraine against Russian warplanes. Italy's government, like that of fellow NATO allies, has ruled out a no-fly zone option, contending it would risk widening the conflict in Europe.

Pope Francis decried the "barbarianism" of the killing of children and other defenseless civilians in Ukraine. He told a crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square for his customary Sunday appearance that the attacks must stop "before cities are reduced to cemeteries."

In Cyprus, dozens of Russian nationals joined Ukrainians in the coastal resort town of Limassol on Sunday to protest the war in Ukraine. About 50 Russians converged on Limassol's promenade prior to joining with other protesters to chant slogans such as "Stop the war, stop Putin" and waving blue and white flags they said where the Russian national flag without the red stripe that represented "blood and violence."

Earlier Sunday, Ukrainian nationals in Taiwan and supporters also staged a march in Taipei to protest the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Russian forces shoot, kill acclaimed US filmmaker, Ukraine police say

By Pamela Sampson
Associated Press

Brent Renaud, an acclaimed filmmaker who traveled to some of the most dangerous corners of the world for documentaries that transported audiences to little-known places of suffering, died Sunday after Russian forces opened fire on his vehicle in Ukraine.

The Little Rock, Arkansas, native was gathering material for a report about refugees when his vehicle was hit at a checkpoint in Irpin, just outside the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv.


Renaud

Renaud, 50, was one of the most respected independent producers of his era, said Christof Putzel, a filmmaker and friend who had received a text from Renaud three days before his death.

Renaud and Putzel won a 2013 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University journalism award for "Arming the Mexican Cartels," a documentary on how guns trafficked from the U.S. fueled rampant drug gang violence.

"He was just the absolute best war journalist that I know," Putzel said via phone from New York City. "This is a guy who literally went to every conflict zone."

U.S. journalist Juan Arredondo said the two were traveling in a vehicle toward the Irpin checkpoint when they were both shot.

Arredondo, speaking from a hospital in Kyiv, told Italian journalist Annalisa Camilli that Renaud was hit in the neck. Camilli said that Arredondo had been hit in the lower back.

"We crossed the first bridge in Irpin, we were going to film other refugees leaving, and we got into a car, somebody offered to take us to the other bridge, we crossed the checkpoint, and they started shooting at us," Arredondo told Camilli in a video interview.

A statement from Kyiv regional police said that Russian troops opened fire on the car.

Hours after the shooting of Renaud, Irpin Mayor Oleksandr Markushyn said journalists would be denied entry to the city. "In this way, we want to save the lives of both them and our defenders," Markushyn said.

Along with his brother Craig, Renaud won a Peabody Award for "Last Chance High," an HBO series about the Moses Montefiore Academy, a school for at-risk youth on Chicago's West Side. The brothers' litany of achievements include two duPont-Columbia journalism awards and acclaimed productions for HBO, NBC, Discovery, PBS, The New York Times and Vice News. Renaud was also a 2019 Nieman fellow at Harvard.

He is survived by his brother Craig, Craig's wife, Mami, and a nephew, Taiyo, 11.

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NEWS BRIEFING

Iran says it's behind missile barrage near US Consulate in Iraq

From news services

BAGHDAD — Iran claimed responsibility Sunday for a missile barrage that struck near a sprawling U.S. Consulate complex in northern Iraq, saying it was retaliation for an Israeli strike in Syria that killed two members of its Revolutionary Guard earlier last week.

Iraq's Foreign Ministry on Sunday summoned Iran's ambassador to protest the attack, calling it a flagrant violation of the country's sovereignty.

No injuries were reported in Sunday's attack on the city of Irbil, which marked an escalation between the U.S. and Iran. Hostility between the longtime foes has often played out in Iraq, whose government is allied with both countries.

The attack drew condemnation from the Iraqi government, which called it a "violation of international law and norms" and demanded an explanation from the Iranian leadership. Iraq's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmad al-Sahhaf said the ministry summoned the Iranian ambassador, Iraj Masjedi, to deliver the diplomatic protest.

The United States said the missile strike emanated from Iran and condemned it.

"The strikes were an outrageous violation of Iraq's sovereignty. No U.S. facilities were damaged or personnel injured, and we have no indications the attack was directed at the United States," State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters in Washington.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said on its website that it attacked what it described as an Israeli spy center in Irbil. It did not elaborate, but in a statement said Israel had been on the offensive, citing the recent strike that killed two members of the Revolutionary Guard.

The semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted a source as saying Iran fired 10 Fateh missiles, including several Fateh-110 missiles, which have a range of about 185 miles.

Following a Cabinet meeting, the Iraqi government in Baghdad reiterated its refusal to allow Iraq to be used to settle scores between other countries, and said it has requested an explanation from the Iranian leadership.

The attack came several days after Iran said it would retaliate for an Israeli strike near Damascus, Syria, that killed two members of its Revolutionary Guard.



More heartache: A bus carrying Ukrainian refugees overturned Sunday on a highway in northeastern Italy, killing a young mother, Italian firefighters said. Italian state TV said there were also five people injured, but none of the injuries was serious, in the crash on the A14 highway near Forli, a town in the Emilia-Romagna region. **ITALIAN FIREMEN CORPS OF THE VIGILI DEL FUOCO**

Obama tests positive: Former President Barack Obama said Sunday that he had tested positive for the coronavirus, though he's feeling relatively healthy and his wife, Michelle, tested negative.

"I've had a scratchy throat for a couple days, but am feeling fine otherwise," Obama said on Twitter. "Michelle and I are grateful to be vaccinated and boosted."

Obama encouraged more Americans to get vaccinated against the coronavirus, despite the declining infection rate in the country. There were roughly 35,000 infections on average over the past week, down sharply from mid-January when that average was closer to 800,000.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 75.2% of U.S. adults are fully vaccinated and 47.7% of the fully vaccinated have received a booster shot. The CDC relaxed its guidelines for indoor masking in late February, taking a more holistic approach that meant the vast majority of Americans live in areas without the recommendation for indoor masking in public.

Gas prices: The average U.S. price of regular-grade gasoline shot up 79 cents over the past two weeks to a record-setting $4.43 per gallon as Russia's invasion of Ukraine is contributing to already-high prices at the pump.

Industry analyst Trilby Lundberg of the Lundberg Survey said Sunday that the new price exceeds by 32 cents the prior all-time high of $4.11 set in July 2008.

Nationwide, the highest average price for regular-grade gas is in the San Francisco Bay Area, at $5.79 per gallon. The lowest average is in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at $3.80 per gallon.

Turkmenistan election: There was an unexpected wait for the result of Turkmenistan's presidential election that is widely expected to cement a political dynasty after authorities said Sunday they needed more time to count the votes.

Serdar Berdymukhamedov, son of the incumbent Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, was the overwhelming favorite in Saturday's early vote in the gas-rich Central Asian country.

Iran-Saudi talks: Iran has decided to temporarily suspend its secret Baghdad-brokered talks aimed at defusing yearslong tensions with regional rival Saudi Arabia, Iranian state-linked media reported Sunday, a day after Saudi Arabia carried out its largest known mass execution in its modern history.

The Iranian news website Nournews, considered close to the country's Supreme National Security Council, reported the government had unilaterally paused the talks with Saudi Arabia that have been ongoing in Baghdad over the past year aimed at restoring diplomatic ties.

Iraq's foreign minister earlier had said the fifth round of talks between Saudi and Iranian representatives was due to resume on Wednesday.

The report did not give a reason for Iran's suspension, but it comes after Saudi Arabia put to death 81 people convicted of crimes ranging from killings to ties to militant groups, a group that activists believe included over three dozen Shiites.

Date stabbing: A woman stabbed her date whom she had met online in retaliation for the 2020 death of an Iranian military leader killed in an American drone strike, police said.

Nika Nikoubin, 21, has been charged with attempted murder, battery with a deadly weapon and burglary, KLAS-TV in Nevada reported.

Nikoubin and the man met online on a dating website, Henderson police wrote in an arrest report. The pair agreed to meet at Sunset Station hotel March 5, renting a room together.

While in the room, the pair began having sex when Nikoubin put a blindfold on the man, police said. Nikoubin then turned off the lights, and several minutes later, the man "felt a pain on the side of his neck," KLAS reported.

Nikoubin reportedly stabbed the man in the neck "for revenge against U.S. troops for the killing of Qassem Soleimani in 2020," police wrote in a report.

U.S. forces killed Soleimani , a top general in Iran's military, in a drone strike in January 2020. Soleimani headed the expeditionary Quds Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps. responsible for the Islamic Republic's foreign operations. He gained prominence for advising Shiite paramilitary forces fighting the Islamic State group in Iraq, before it was defeated in 2017.

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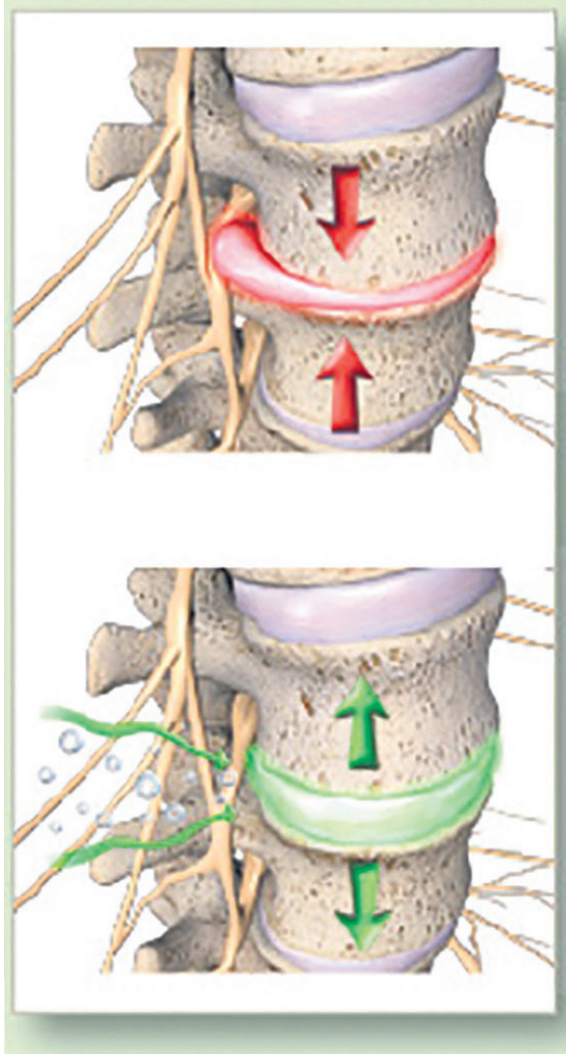
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By Walter E Henderson, D.C.

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C.F., Enfield, CT

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Hand count of ballots gains foothold

Push growing amid mistrust of elections by many in the GOP

By Holly Ramer and Christina A. Cassidy
Associated Press



Election officials sort ballots during an audit in Atlanta. A push is on to end electronic vote counting. **BRYNN ANDERSON/AP 2020**

CONCORD, N.H. — Growing suspicion about the security of voting systems has kindled a back-to-the future moment among conservatives in some parts of the country.

Republican lawmakers in at least six states have introduced legislation that would require all election ballots to be counted by hand instead of electronic tabulators. Similar proposals have been floated within some local governments, including about a dozen New Hampshire towns and Washoe County in the presidential battleground state of Nevada.

The push for counting ballots by hand comes amid mistrust of elections among many Republicans who believe the false narrative that widespread fraud cost former President Donald Trump reelection in the 2020 presidential contest. Despite no evidence of widespread fraud or major irregularities, conspiracy theories have proliferated among his allies that voting systems were somehow manipulated to favor Democrat Joe Biden.

"It's our responsibility, and it should be our desire, to count every vote and to imbue confidence in our citizenry that our elections are fair and free, and that their vote is being counted," said New Hampshire state Rep. Mark Alliegro, sponsor of a hand-counting bill that is similar to ones proposed in Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Washington and West Virginia.

Alliegro said he was motivated by his analysis of recounts in nearly 50 New Hampshire state legislative races.

But some of the bill's supporters reference the 2020 election to explain why they feel his hand-count legislation is needed. They cite a belief that Trump actually won a landslide victory and that cheating is the only way to explain how New Hampshire voters elected a Republican governor and GOP majorities in the Legislature, but then backed Democrats for federal office.

Critics of the proposals to ditch electronic ballot tabulators and return to hand counting are blunt about what they see as the motivation.

"It's coming from conspiracy theories and lies," said Sylvia Albert, director of voting and elections for Common Cause, a nonpartisan group that advocates for expanded voter access. "It's attempting to lower people's confidence in elections."

Albert and others said it's unrealistic to think election officials can count millions of ballots by hand and report results quickly, given that ballots often include dozens of races. The partisan review last summer of the 2 million ballots cast in Maricopa County, Arizona, which included a hand count, took several months and hundreds of people to complete.

"If you have a jurisdiction with 500 voters, you might be OK. But if you have a jurisdiction with thousands of voters, tens of thousands of voters, hundreds of thousands of voters, it's just not going to work," said Jennifer Morrell, a former elections clerk in Colorado and Utah who now advises state and local election officials.

Even in New Hampshire's small towns, hand counting is a complicated, lengthy process when a typical ballot might include 50 questions, said Milford Town Clerk Joan Dargie, who spoke against the proposed legislation on behalf of the New Hampshire City and Town Clerks Association. She estimates her town would have to increase its number of election workers from 200 to 350, and said many of her fellow clerks have said they will quit if they have to tabulate every ballot by hand.

"People who are asking to get rid of machines obviously haven't worked in an election," she said.

As one example, Cobb County, Georgia, performed a hand tally ordered by the state after the 2020 election. It took hundreds of people five days to count just the votes for president on roughly 397,000 ballots, said Janine Eveler, elections director for the county in metro Atlanta. She estimates it would have taken 100 days to count every race on each ballot using the same procedures.

Counting by machine isn't just faster. Multiple studies have shown it's also more accurate, said Charles Stewart, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor of political science.

The first research on the topic was done almost two decades ago comparing recounts of New Hampshire races that were originally tabulated by hand to those tabulated by machines. In that study and subsequent research, the machines won, he said.

"Counting votes is very tedious. Human beings are bad doing tedious things, and computers are very good at doing tedious things," Stewart said.

Most states conduct post-election audits that are designed to identify any irregularities with ballot scanning and counting. But with many Republicans believing Biden was not legitimately elected, election machines have become a popular target.

In Nevada, a Republican county commissioner is pushing a proposal that would require hand counts of all ballots, along with a return to primarily in-person voting and beefing up uniformed security at polling places.

"I'm 82 years old and I've been through a lot of elections," said Washoe County Commissioner Jeanne Herman. "I know that something is not right."

The proposal has drawn opposition from other commissioners, the biggest labor union in the state and a rare front-page editorial in the largest newspaper in northern Nevada, which said the measure could cost taxpayers "millions of dollars to chase down Facebook rumors of illusory election fraud."

In West Virginia, a bill to repeal the state law governing tabulation machines died in committee this month.

In Missouri, lawmakers have not yet acted on a proposal that would ban electronic voting machines and tabulation equipment and require hand counting to be livestreamed and recorded.

The bill's sponsor, Republican state Rep. Mitch Boggs Jr., said he is responding to constituent concerns.

"You file what the constituents are asking for," Boggs said. "But at the end of the day, what they're really wanting is just the transparency."

Republican state Rep. Petty McGaugh said the legislation would delay election results and likely undermine their accuracy. When she became clerk of rural Carroll County in 1995, election staffers were still hand counting ballots by marking tallies in blocks of five on paper. She noticed multiple errors and eventually switched the county to an electronic tabulation system.

"I don't really think that in this day and age we need to go back to hand counting where it's so susceptible to human error," she said.



Medical personnel respond Saturday at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City after a man stabbed two employees when he was denied entry. **YUICHI SHIMADA VIA AP**

Video shows man stabbing workers at museum in NYC

By Marina Villeneueve and Bryan Gallion
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Video from the Museum of Modern Art shows the moment a man leaped over a reception desk and stabbed two employees as they tried to flee Saturday.

The video released by New York City police shows a man police identified as Gary Cabana, 60, entering the museum lobby through a revolving door and then climbing onto the desk and jumping over it as a man carrying what appears to be a walkie-talkie tries in vain to stop him.

Police were still searching for Cabana on Sunday.

The man, wearing a black wool hat and a surgical mask, approaches three employees who are trapped in the small space and stabs one of them — a woman who is able to run away seconds later — though not before she is stabbed again in the back.

The attacker then stabs the second employee as the man with the walkie-talkie hurls a notebook at him. That appears to distract the attacker long enough for the second victim to flee. The third employee can be seen getting up from the ground after the attacker runs away.

Authorities said Saturday that the two museum employees, a 24-year-old man and 24-year-old woman, were both stable with non-life-threatening injuries. Their names weren't released.

According to police, Cabana was denied entrance Saturday for previous incidents of disorderly conduct.

John Miller, NYPD deputy commissioner of intelligence and counterterrorism, said his membership had been revoked for two separate incidents of disorderly behavior at the museum in recent days.

A letter informing Cabana of his expired membership had been sent out Friday, but he came to the museum Saturday saying he intended to see a film there, according to police.

He then became upset and stabbed the museum employees in the back, collarbone and the back of neck, Miller said. They were rushed within minutes to the hospital.

Miller said Saturday that the video showed which way the suspect went after leaving the museum. Police shared photos of Cabana late Saturday night, asking for the public's help finding him.

The department has no record of a previous arrest for the man.

The museum was closed Sunday.

Yuichi Shimada, a museumgoer present at the time of the attack, tweeted he was on the second floor when a couple came running toward him, and he heard security guards' radios throughout the museum loudly announcing something at the same time.

"It was chaotic, partly because it was snowing, with a group of young women in a panic and crying," Shimada said. "Not being good with claustrophobia myself, I headed for the exit early."

MoMA, founded in 1929, is one of New York City's top tourist attractions, and drew more than 700,000 visitors in 2020. Its collection of modern art includes "The Starry Night" by Vincent Van Gogh, and works by Henri Matisse and Paul Gauguin.

China tightens limits on pair of cities amid virus outbreak

By Keith Bradsher
The New York Times



A worker in protective gear helps pass on a bag from a resident inside a community under lockdown in Beijing, which reported only seven new cases Sunday. **NG HAN GUAN/AP**

BEIJING — Two of China's largest cities, Shenzhen and Shanghai, imposed stringent restrictions Sunday on the movements of their residents, as a coronavirus outbreak continued to spread across much of mainland China.

While China still has far fewer cases than most countries, the daily count of known infections has accelerated rapidly.

The country's National Health Commission reported 3,122 new cases Sunday, up from 1,524 Saturday and 1,100 Friday, and a couple hundred per day a little more than a week ago. The average number of new cases has reached 1,370 per day over the past week, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Shenzhen, a city bordering Hong Kong that is the hub of China's tech sector and electronics manufacturing industries, announced Sunday night a lockdown for the next seven days. All nonessential workers must stay home, adults must undergo three PCR tests in the coming days, and buses and subway trains are being halted. Supermarkets, farmers markets, pharmacies, medical institutions and express delivery services will be allowed to stay open.

A lockdown in Shenzhen might further disrupt global supply chains because Shenzhen has one of the world's largest ports. An outbreak in Shenzhen in late spring of last year held up port operations and caused a spike in global shipping rates that helped drive up prices for imported goods in the United States and elsewhere.

China has tried to keep ports running during outbreaks since then by requiring many port workers to live at the docks for weeks at a time. The municipal lockdown order Sunday did not exempt port workers, but port management companies have argued in the past that their workers are essential.

Shenzhen and Shanghai barred their residents over their weekend from leaving either city unless necessary and even then only with a negative result from a PCR test. Shanghai also halted intercity bus service but has not ordered a citywide lockdown.

Shenzhen reported 66 cases Sunday, all but six of them with symptoms already apparent. By comparison, Shanghai reported 65 cases Sunday, with just one already showing symptoms. All infected people are hospitalized in China, sometimes in makeshift hospitals that are quickly erected, so as to isolate them and limit further spread.

Shenzhen had tightened prevention and control measures in February, including steps to prevent truck drivers from bringing infections into mainland China from Hong Kong, where there is an enormous outbreak, and deaths have surged.

Despite those efforts, many users of Weibo, the Chinese social media network, faulted Hong Kong for the outbreak in Shenzhen, because the city has not implemented the kind of lockdown measures seen in mainland China. Beijing reported seven cases Sunday, only one of which was asymptomatic.

Shanghai Disneyland announced that effective Sunday, it was halting all theater shows and requiring any visitors to show negative results from a PCR acid test taken in the preceding 24 hours.

The most severe outbreaks in mainland China are in towns and cities in the northeastern province of Jilin, which borders North Korea and Russia and accounted for two-thirds of the cases announced Sunday. Two mayors were dismissed in the province Saturday, in hard-hit Jilin City and in the Jiutai district of the city of Changchun.

Nearly half of the cases across China that were announced Sunday involved people who did not initially show symptoms. China has a high rate of vaccination, except among the elderly. China has attributed the high number of asymptomatic cases to the prevalence of the highly contagious omicron variant. A few cases of the delta variant have also been detected near China's borders in recent weeks.

Helen Bennett
Executive Editor
hbennett@courant.com

OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Did Trump-Putin talks touch on Ukraine?

During his presidency, Donald Trump met Vladimir Putin five times, although not all were official, but the common thread that has run through these meetings was that all of the conversations were private. Trump went as far as confiscating interpreters' notes and generally hiding the context of these discussions with Putin from his own administration and the American people.

Fast forward to the events between Ukraine and Russia, which have shown a systematic effort by Putin to seize part or all of Ukraine and place it back under Russian domination. One would wonder if Putin shared any of his plans with Trump, but then we will not know until Trump himself decides what his truth actually is.

Gale Morganroth, Coventry

Clinton accepted 2016 loss graciously

Like many Republicans, Mike Gagliardi of Berlin seems to be suffering from Hillary Derangement Syndrome and a bad case of Whataboutism, as evidenced by his Feb. 20 letter ["How about questions for Democratic candidates?"]. It's 2022, yet he is still dredging up gripes about Hillary Clinton from 2016. I don't recall the context in which Ms. Clinton called Donald Trump an illegitimate president, but it's really beside the point. Ms. Clinton conceded the election swiftly and accepted her defeat graciously. She did not incite an insurrection or plot to undermine the peaceful transfer of power, nor did she try to bully election officials into finding her several thousand votes, as you-know-who did. If you ask most Democrats, we will say yes, the 2016 election was fair and legitimate; and yes, Donald Trump was the lawfully elected president, despite losing the popular vote by 3 million votes.

As for the Mueller Report, another "what about" that Mr. Gagliardi brings up, that report did not exonerate Trump and his cronies. It simply said there wasn't enough evidence to prove a criminal conspiracy. Questions about the 2020 election are fair game for every Republican candidate running for office in 2022 and 2024, including Mr. Gagliardi. We need to know if political candidates believe in free and fair elections and the rule of law, also known as democracy.

Mark Slitt, Bloomfield

Blumenthal could tackle real issues, not gas tax

I find it frustrating when a politician, especially during an election year, submits a proposal that they think saves families money. In this case, Sen. Richard Blumenthal's assertion that suspending the federal gas tax at $0.18 a gallon will save families a lot of money is absurd. Let us say the average family fills their 20-gallon tank six times a month. That math will have them saving $21.60 a month. That is not a lot to make a difference for a struggling family. I find these election-year proposals disingenuous and demeaning toward the intellect of the citizens who understand the true nature of the proposal. I believe Sen. Blumenthal should concentrate on the inflation and supply-chain issues affecting all families rather than his reelection to the Senate.

Gary R. Maglio, Wolcott,

Invasion stirs ugly memories of Sudetenland

You can't change a fact by changing a definition. Vladimir Putin has invaded Ukraine. Is this the Sudetenland 2022 version?

George Generas, Simsbury

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Why I... In which you explain why you feel so strongly about something in Connecticut.

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We welcome all submissions and will publish the best. We especially look for younger writers and those whose voices aren't heard often enough. Essays should be 600-700 words, written in the first person and emailed to oped@courant.com.



Service Employees International Union District 1199 workers in the service and maintenance units at Cabell Huntington Hospital demonstrate in Huntington, West Virginia, in November. **SHOLTEN SINGER/THE HERALD-DISPATCH**

OP-ED

The pros and cons of unions

By Brian Clemow

There have been a lot of stories recently about labor union issues, ranging from organizing efforts at big employers like Starbucks and Amazon, to the Biden administration's push for project labor agreements covering government construction work, to the large annual deficits at UConn Health attributed to the cost of benefits provided under contracts negotiated with state employee unions. However, there is little discussion of the pros and cons of unions more generally, as they relate not just to covered employees but also to society as a whole.

Full disclosure: I spent 50 years as a lawyer helping public and private sector employers in Connecticut and beyond deal with the unionization process, and negotiating collective bargaining agreements with unions that represented employees. I came to realize there are many situations, past and present, where unions play an important role in obtaining fair pay and benefits as well as decent working conditions from employers who are not inclined to provide them on their own. That's even true in the public sector, where nonunion employees sometimes go years without raises so the powers-that-be can avoid unpopular tax increases.

But we all pay a price for these gains, and it's not just a monetary price. Because labor laws require unions to represent everyone in a given group, whether it's hourly industrial workers or teachers in a school district, they tend to advocate for both stars and slackers equally. Therefore, of the hundreds of union contracts I've seen, almost all of them (except those covering factory jobs that are paid based on piecework) set pay rates based on nothing but time on the job. Merit is largely irrelevant. Many other rights and benefits are solely dependent on seniority as well.

Many unionized employers would agree to increased compensation for their workers if it were directed primarily toward high performers, both in order to reward and retain those employees and to incentivize others to step up their game. However, several union representatives I have worked with have told me merit pay is a non-starter. One even went so far as to say he personally thought performance-based compensation had some advantages, but if he worked with me to develop a framework for such a system, he would be kicked out of office.

Another example of a union upside with a significant downside is the arbitration of grievances over discipline or discharge of bargaining unit employees. This virtually universal element of union contracts is intended to protect workers against arbitrary mistreatment by less than objective supervisors. However, it sometimes produces outrageous results, such as when an arbitrator reinstated a UConn hospital employee fired for doing drugs while in his employer's vehicle and on the clock. Unions might applaud such decisions as victories, but most members of the public would not.

There are other drawbacks. Like many institutions, unions tend to pay the most attention to members who make the most noise, and it's not surprising that those individuals don't always make a constructive contribution to the discourse on any given issue. Sometimes a few unreasonable members can stand in the way of the most logical resolution of a dispute. In addition, large numbers of dues-payers produce large bank accounts, which raises the risk of corruption within union leadership. The Teamsters Union is the most highly publicized but certainly not the only example.

In short, unionization is a mixed bag of pluses and minuses. That's particularly true in the public sector, where organized support of politicians by unions sometimes puts labor and management in each other's pocket. I'm a lifelong Democrat, but I'm not comfortable with the consistent support of Democratic lawmakers by state employee unions in Connecticut, who represent 50,000 voters and their families. This has been a significant factor in the creation of a system that produces pension and health insurance benefits that far exceed those of most private sector employees.

We all know that unions aren't going anywhere anytime soon, and according to some press reports might actually be coming back from decades of membership loss. Given the power of the mega-employers that increasingly dominate our economy, that may not be a bad thing. However, we should all pay close attention not only to the ways in which unions are helping society as a whole, but also to those in which they are not.

Brian Clemow is an attorney who lives in West Hartford.

OP-ED

How we became a nation of the woke and the wary, walking on eggshells

By George F. Will
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Today's festival of offended sensitivities was prefigured in 1991 at a Penn State University branch, when a female English instructor demanded that a reproduction of Goya's "Naked Maja" (the original is in Madrid's Prado), which had been hanging there for years, be removed from her classroom. Her alternative demand was — think about this — that a male nude be placed beside it. To balance the affront?

A campus executive ordered the picture removed because it could contribute to a "chilly" classroom climate, thus violating sexual harassment law. This harbinger of the era of "microaggressions" occurred while Congress was enacting the Civil Rights Act of 1991, adding to existing law a provision for compensatory and punitive damages — not for lost wages because of harassment, but for emotional distress.

Law shapes as well as reflects culture, and Gail L. Heriot of the University of San Diego School of Law argues in her essay "The Roots of Wokeness" that those new Title VII damage remedies propelled the nation's downward spiral into identity politics, speech regulation and an epidemic of irritability. After the change, Heriot reports, there was "a dramatic increase in the number of harassment charges filed" and in the monetary stakes. In the final quarter of 1991, the number of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) harassment charges increased 71% over the same period in 1990.

The change discouraged racial and sexual harassment. At the considerable cost, Heriot argues, of "strengthen[ing] identity politics while weakening support for free expression" concerning race or sex. Because employers could be liable for a "hostile environment" created by employees, the change regarding remedial measures "made it pay for employers to start vigilantly policing their employees' speech." Because there were now "generous remedies for a vaguely defined wrong" — a "hostile environment" could be the cumulative effect of small annoyances — employers tended toward "zero tolerance" policies.

So, a multibillion-dollar training ("consciousness-raising," updated) industry was born to supplement the programs of corporations' burgeoning human resources bureaucracies. Heriot says trainers and administrators wished to justify not just their basic services, but also the expansion of them: "The level of sensitivity they promoted grew ever more exacting, as exemplified by the popularization of the concepts of micro-aggressions and white privilege."

For the sensitivity industry, the concepts of microaggressions and zero tolerance have become gifts that can never stop giving. Mostly invisible, the aggressions can only be identified by the sensitivity industry's experts. Everyone else cannot be too careful.

It has become legally fraught for employees to say "the most qualified person should get the job," or "America is the land of opportunity," or "America is a melting pot," or "All lives matter." America has become the land of wary people walking on eggshells. Vague, shifting definitions of "harassment" inhibit the exercise of First Amendment speech rights.

In 1986, the Supreme Court held that the EEOC had correctly decided that employees have a right (herewith the court's language) "to work in an environment free from discriminatory intimidation, ridicule, and insult." Heriot correctly calls this "a somewhat unusual statement" because "no one has a *general* 'right' to be free from ridicule or insult, and the federal government cannot, consistently with the First Amendment, create such a right" for "the context of employment."

The evolving law of "harassment" and "hostile environment" prompted attitudinal changes congruent with three emerging cultural ideas: That it is wholesome to define one's identity with reference to race, sex or ethnicity. That this *should* make one acutely alert to affronts, even if micro. And that there is an entitlement to pass through life without emotional distress occasioned by abraded sensitivities.

Time was, America's aspiration was for preoccupations with racial, sexual and ethnic differences to lose political saliency, and to recede as relations between the sexes and races became more relaxed. Instead, those preoccupations have intensified as government policy has encouraged them, and embraced discrimination on the basis of them.

The Penn State instructor who objected to "Naked Maja" felt "embarrassment": "I identified with her as a woman. I felt as though I were standing there naked, exposed and vulnerable. ... I have always felt that when one woman is portrayed naked and ridiculed, we all are." One wonders: Do people viewing the original in the Prado see ridicule?

Never mind. For America's cultural sensitivity industry, all that matters is the response of the "victim." The day Penn State ordered the removal of the reproduction was the day Congress passed the expanded remedies for "harassment."

George F. Will writes on politics and domestic and foreign affairs for The Washington Post.

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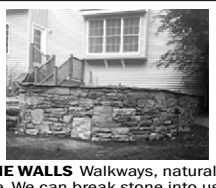
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PUBLIC NOTICES

Connecticut

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT #10 Towns of Burlington and Harwinton

A Public Hearing for the purpose of presenting the proposed 2022/2023 Regional School District #10 budget will be held on Monday, March 21, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Har-Bur Middle School.
Copies of proposed budget will be posted at www.Region10ct.org. Any resident may recommend the inclusion or deletion of expenditures at such time.
RSD 10 Board of Education Budget Public Hearing - March 21, 2022 - 7:00 PM
3/14/2022 7167093

REQUEST FOR FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL

The Brookfield Board of Education (Board) is soliciting proposals from Food Service Management Companies (FSMCs) to enter into a contract for the operation of a food service program in the Brookfield Public Schools for school year 2022-23.

The contract award will allow for up to four one year renewals, subject to the mutual agreement of the Board and the selected FSMC.

A mandatory pre-proposal meeting will be held on Thursday March 31 at 11:00AM in the Board's Curriculum Conference Room, 2nd floor, 100 Pocono Road, Brookfield, CT. A cafeteria/kitchen tour will immediately follow the meeting.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) is available on the Town Website

https://www.brookfieldct.gov, the CT source bid portal https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard and available by request to Julian.capadose@brookfieldct.gov

Sealed proposals will be received until 11:00AM, Monday April 14 2022, at the office of the Purchasing Manager, 100 Pocono Road, Brookfield, CT. Interested parties may contact Ken Post, Director of Business Operations, at (203) 775-7629.
3/14, 3/15/2022 7168681

Legal Notice Request for Proposals Automated Work Zone Speed Control Design-Build Pilot Project

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is seeking to engage a contracting firm to provide services related to Automated Work Zone Speed Control pilot project. More detailed information regarding this project can be found at:
https://webprocure.perfect.com/wp-web-public/#/bidboard/bid/98540?customerid=51

Connecticut Department of Transportation
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3/14/2022 7168729

HOUSING AUTHRRITY OF THE TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR Request for Qualifications for Architectural and Engineering Professional Services

The South Windsor Housing Authority extends an invitation to a team of architects, engineers, and energy consultants to submit a statement of their qualifications in providing plans and specifications for the modernization of the affordable housing site Flax Hill in South Windsor, CT. The team of professionals should indicate their ability to perform work required in a timely and sufficient manner as required by CHFA, DOH and LIHTC funding sources. All respondents must be licensed to perform services in the State of Connecticut.
All activities will be performed in strict accordance with all guidelines and requirements established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.), Department of Housing (DOH), and Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) as they may apply. Procurement and contract award are subject to all applicable Federal, State, and local laws/regulations. Request for Proposal documents may be obtained at the offices of the South Windsor Housing Authority, 50 Elm Street, South Windsor, CT 06074. Proposals are due not later than 10:00 a.m. on Monday, March 29, 2022.
AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYEER MBE's, WBE's SBE's and SECTION 3 DESIGNATED ENTERPRISES ARE ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT
3/9, 3/14/2022 7165168

LEGAL NOTICE SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL/CONTRACT FOR FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT COMPANIES RFP # 2022-004

RFP documents for food service management companies for the South Windsor Public Schools for the 2022-2023 school year, RFP #2022-004, are available at RFPs and Bids - South Windsor Public Schools (southwindsorschools.org) which is located on the district's website at www.southwindsorpublicschools.org and on CTsource, https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/CTSource. Paper copies may be obtained, by request, at the office of the Director of Finance & Operations, South Windsor Board of Education, 1737 Main Street, Room 203, South Windsor, CT on or after 9:00 a.m., March 14, 2022.
Sealed bids will be received at the address listed above until 11:00 a.m., Eastern Standard Time, on April 25, 2022. Thereafter, bids will be publicly opened and eligible vendor proposal names will be announced.
South Windsor Public Schools reserves the rights to: amend or terminate this Request for Proposal; accept all or any part of a proposal; reject any or all proposals; waive any informalities or non-material deficiencies in a proposal; and award the contract to the company that, in its judgment, will be in South Windsor Public School's best interests.
3/14/2022 7167000

NOTICE

CARE AND PROTECTION, TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS, SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION, DOCKET NUMBER: 20CP0113BE, Trial Court of Massachusetts, Juvenile Court Department, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, Franklin/Hampshire County Juvenile Court, 116 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035 TO: Unknown unnamed father of Donovan Willey born on March 1, 2007 in Windham, CT to Christina Willey: A petition has been presented to this court by DCF Robert Van Wart, seeking, as to the following child Donovan M Willey that said child be found in need of care and protection and committed to the Department of Children and Families. The court may dispense the rights of the person(s) named herein to receive notice of or to consent to any legal proceeding affecting the adoption, custody, or guardianship or any other disposition of the child named herein, if it finds that the child is in need of care and protection and that the best interests of the child would be served by said disposition.
You are hereby ORDERED to appear in this court, at the court address set forth above, on the following date and time: 04/01/2022 at 09:30 AM Hearing on Merits
You may bring an attorney with you. If you have a right to an attorney and if the court determines that you are indigent, the court will appoint an attorney to represent you.
If you fail to appear, the court may proceed on that date and any date thereafter with a trial on the merits of the petition and an adjudication of this matter.
For further information, call the Office of the Clerk- Magistrate at (413) 323-4056.
WITNESS: Hon. Charles S. Belsky, FIRST JUSTICE, Christopher D. Reavey, CLERK-MAGISTRATE, DATE ISSUED: 02/18/2022
3/4, 3/7, 3/14/2022 7157109

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE: SELF STORAGE UNITS LEGAL NOTICE: NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE:

Storage Sense Southington will hold an online auction to sell personal property described below belonging to the individual listed at the location indicated: 751 West Queen Street, Southington CT 06489 , 3/18/21 2:00 PM. Unit 227 Ryan Kell: upholstered headboard and boxed bedframe. Unit 048 Ofelia Rodriguez: 2 folding chairs,wicker baskets,filled boxes,area rug,wicker floor mat,brown fur-like coat,cables,empty wooden box
Blanket. The auction will be listed and advertised on www.lockerfox.com. Purchases must be made with cash only paid at the above referenced facility to complete the transaction. Storage Sense may refuse any bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the property.
3/14/2022 7168266

Steve Dale's
PET WORLD
Sundays in Smarter Living

Notice of Permit Application Town: Manchester, Connecticut

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Manchester, Sanitation Division, (the applicant) of 321 Olcott Street, Manchester, Connecticut will submit to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection an application for a permit for a Title V source under section 22a-174 of the Connecticut General Statutes, and section 22a-174-33 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies which are regulated under the Federal Clean Air Act.

Specifically, the applicant proposes to renew the existing Title V Air Operating Permit (Permit No. 097-0127-TV) which is required every five years. The proposed activity will take place at the Manchester Landfill Premises, which is located on the north side of Olcott Street between Love Lane and Spencer Street, Manchester, Connecticut. The proposed activity potentially will affect: air resources.

Interested persons may obtain copies of the application from the Director of Public Works, Town of Manchester, Sanitation Division, 321 Olcott Street, PO. Box 0191, Manchester, Connecticut, 06045-0191, phone number 860-647-3067.

The application will be available for inspection at the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, 79 Elm Street, 5th Floor, Hartford, CT 06106-5127, 860-424-4152, from 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday. Please call in advance to schedule review of the application.
3/14/2022 7168627

Liquor Notices

LIQUOR PERMIT NOTICE OF APPLICATION

This is to give notice that I, **KYUNG H CHONG, 1659 BELL BLVD BAYSIDE, NY 11360-1639.** Have filed an application placarded **03/07/2022** with the Department of Consumer Protection for a **RESTAURANT LIQUOR PERMIT** for the sale of alcoholic liquor on the premises at **65 PRATT ST HARTFORD CT 06103-1635**. The business will be owned by SUNBERRYS CAFE & CATERING INC.. Entertainment will consist of: No Live Entertainment Objections must be filed by: 04-18-2022.

03/07/2022
KYUNG H CHONG
3/7, 3/14/2022 7161569

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Saturdays in MOTORING



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OBITUARIES BY TOWN

Cromwell
Martha Schukoske
East Hartford
Domingo Aldarondo
Manchester
Domingo Aldarondo
Middletown
Julie A. Kobus
Portland
Julie A. Kobus

*** Denotes name listing only.**
Please note: not all death notices are in alphabetical order.

OBITUARIES

Aldarondo, Domingo



it's been four long years since you left us and we miss you a lot we will also never forget you and what you have done for us

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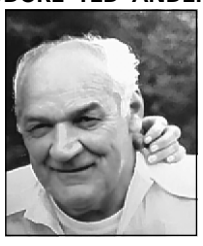
Kobus, Julie Ann

Born: Aug. 27 1942 in New Britain CT, Died: Mar. 7 2022, Resident of Portland CT., Survived by sister Dorothy Kobus Wethersfield CT

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143





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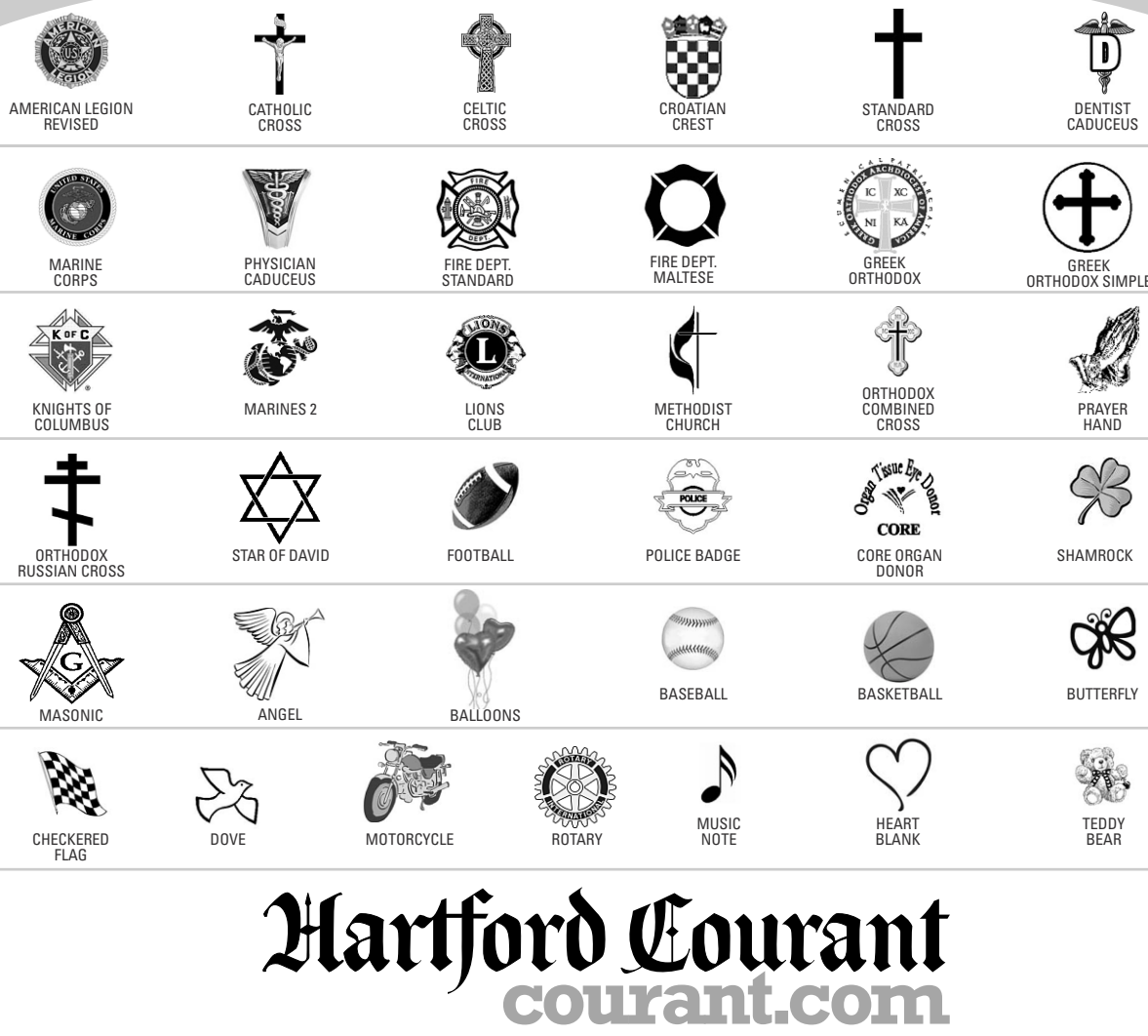
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Suspect ID'd in worship house blazes

Arson charges follow fires at New Britain church, synagogue

By Lori Riley
Hartford Courant

A person suspected of setting fires at two houses of worship in New Britain and setting off a burglar alarm at another on Friday night has been identified as Kimorah Parker, according to social media posts by New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart.

Parker, 30, is charged with arson and burglary, both in the third degree, according to Stewart's posts on Facebook and Twitter.

"I am proud of the hard work that NBPD and NBFD do to keep us safe," Stewart posted on Facebook Saturday.

New Britain firefighters were called Friday night to put out two fires, one at a church and one at a synagogue, in New Britain about 45 minutes apart, and a burglar alarm was set off at a third church.

The first call came in at 8:05 p.m. from Tephereth Israel Synagogue at 76 Winter St. Forty-five minutes later, the second fire was discovered at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church at 95 Franklin Square.

A burglary alarm then went off at St. Joseph's Church, a Catholic church at 195 South Main St.

Stewart said damage was "fairly extensive" at the synagogue but minimal at St. Matthew's and nothing was found in a police sweep at St. Joseph's.

No one was injured in either fire.

Stewart also shared on Facebook a message she said she received from the FBI about the fires.

"Please be advised that the FBI

Turn to Suspect, Page 2



Damage to one of the windows on the side of the building is visible the morning after a fire at a synagogue on Winter Street in New Britain. **KENNETH R. GOSSELIN / HARTFORD COURANT**



Maple Street School students Amanda Davila and Kevin Fair show footballs signed by Tom Brady, left, and Rob Gronkowski. Principal Josh Egan, background, reached out to a friend and college roommate last year, asking for help raising money for the school in Vernon's Rockville section. Egan's friend, who works for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, delivered the two signed footballs. **MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT**

Vernon school strikes gold with footballs

Brady-, Gronk-autographed items to be raffled off

By Jesse Leavenworth
Hartford Courant

A Vernon elementary school principal reached out to an old friend and former college roommate last year, asking for help raising money for the school that serves mostly low-income families.

Maple Street School Principal Josh Egan's friend, who works for the 2021 Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers, delivered gold — two footballs, one signed by Bucs quarterback Tom Brady and one by tight end Rob "Gronk" Gronkowski.

"There's very few times I'm in shock and don't know

Turn to Footballs, Page 2



Tampa Bay Buccaneers tight end Rob Gronkowski, left, and quarterback Tom Brady. **STEVE LUCIANO/AP**

Prison sentence in fraud scheme

Group home operator to serve time for bilking Medicaid out of $1.3M

By Edmund H. Mahony
Hartford Courant

The operator of group homes for abuse victims and others with a variety of mental health concerns was sentenced in federal court to 57 months in prison for defrauding the state Medicaid program of more than $1.3 million by billing the state for psychotherapy services that were never provided to clients.

Cortney Dunlap, 36, of Burlington, was a licensed professional counselor who owned two Hartford-based companies that managed group homes in Harford, Bristol, Cromwell and Waterbury. The businesses offered counseling and other services for low-income clients with an array of emotional, neurological and psychiatric health issues.

Federal prosecutors said that for two years beginning in 2018, Dunlap billed the state for nonexistent psychotherapy services. On rare occasions when service was provided, federal prosecutors said it was provided by unlicensed, unqualified individuals.

The state Medicaid program suspended Dunlap almost two years ago, at about the same time federal agents searched his office. In spite of the knowledge that he was suspected of fraud, federal officials said Dunlap continued to bill Medicaid by using the Medicaid provider number issued by the state to an unwitting colleague.

Federal authorities claim that Dunlap required residents of the group homes his companies operated or managed to give him their Medicaid cards as well as those of their children. He is accused of using those Medicaid numbers to bill the state for additional, nonexistent psychotherapy treatments. The authorities said Dunlap submitted false billings for 65 group home residents or their children in the amount of about $550,000.

In 2019, the New Haven public school system hired Dunlap as a guidance counselor at the New

Turn to Sentence, Page 2

Yale professor warns shortage of behavioral health workers is 'dire'

Creative ideas needed, he tells state council

By Eliza Fawcett
Hartford Courant

A psychiatry professor at the Yale University School of Medicine painted a sobering portrait of the behavioral health workforce in Connecticut and across America during a meeting last week of the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council.

"I no longer call it a crisis; I really call it an emergency across our nation," Michael Hoge, who is also the director of Yale Behavioral Health, told the council,

Turn to Workforce, Page 2



The emergency department at Connecticut Children's has seen a surge in demand for urgent behavioral health care in recent weeks. Workers in the field are struggling to keep up. **ELIZA FAWCETT/HARTFORD COURANT**

Advocates push 'fair share' law for affordable housing

But opponents say measure would lead to loss of local control

By Ginny Monk
CT Mirror

An approach to affordable housing that would assign each town a certain number of units to plan and zone for, based on the needs of its region, would help cut down on housing segregation in Connecticut, advocates said.

Under the proposed "Fair Share" law, the state Office of Policy and Management would assess the need for affordable housing in different parts of Connecticut. Then, towns would share the responsibility to meet that need.

The goal is to increase Connecticut's affordable housing stock.

"Our broken housing system is the root of many of the problems we have with business and business growth," said Sonya Jelks, Connecticut director at the Corporation for Supportive Housing and a city councilor in Meriden.

Under the measure, a town's share would be based on its wealth, median income compared to other towns in the region, percentage of housing stock that's multifamily housing, and the poverty rate.

The methodology would need to be determined by July 1, 2024. OPM would also set measures to ensure towns comply with the requirement and offer ways to help them achieve the goal.

Towns would have to come up

Turn to Housing, Page 2

Yale researchers find good predictor of COVID-19 mortality

By Eliza Fawcett

Using a machine learning tool built to analyze vast amounts of data, Yale researchers determined that a specific combination of immune cell types was closely predictive of whether a hospitalized COVID-19 patient died or survived in the early months of the pandemic.

The study, published recently in the journal Nature Biotechnology, used a machine learning tool called the Multiscale PHATE tool to analyze 55 million blood cells from 163 patients admitted to Yale New Haven Hospital with severe cases of COVID-19 between March and May 2020.

The Multiscale PHATE tool, which was developed at Yale, "sweeps through all levels of data granularity to learn abstracted biological features directly predictive of disease outcome," according to the study, which was co-authored by Manik Kuchroo, a doctoral candidate at Yale School of Medicine, Jessie Huang, a postdoctoral researcher in the Yale Department of Computer Science and Patrick Wong, an immunobiology graduate student at Yale.

While similar tools can explore cellular data at a "singular resolution," the Multiscale PHATE tool can "learn and visualize abstract cellular features and groupings of the data at all levels of granularity." Equipped with the Multiscale PHATE tool, researchers could piece apart the cell responses that were linked to increased COVID-19 mortality.

Previous research had established that T cells (a type of white blood cell) were "protective against poor outcomes" of COVID-19 disease, and researchers found that high levels of T cells correlated with better outcomes for hospitalized patients. Meanwhile, levels of granulocytes and monocytes (different types of white blood cells) were correlated with increased mortality. But on an even more detailed level, researchers found that the specific combination of TH17 (a helper T cell) and immune system cells IL-17 and IFNG was linked to increased mortality.

"Although broad cell types, such as T cells, may appear to be protective, smaller cellular subsets, such as pathogenic Th17 cells, may actually be driving patient mortality," the researchers wrote in the study.

In fact, when researchers measured the quantities of those cells in a patient's blood, they found they could predict whether the patient survived or died with 83% accuracy.

"Machine learning algorithms typically focus on a single resolution view of the data, ignoring information that can be found in other more focused views," Kuchroo said in a statement. "For this reason, we created Multiscale PHATE, which allows users to zoom in and focus on specific subsets of their data to perform more detailed analysis."

Eliza Fawcett can be reached at elfawcett@courant.com.

Sentence

from Page 1

Haven Adult and Continuing Education Center.

Federal authorities said he accessed a database of personal identifying information of students and former students and fraudulently billed the state for providing phony treatment to those with Medicaid cards.

Federal authorities said he submitted false billings for 135 students totaling about $600,000.

Dunlap also submitted phony billings for treatments to his employees and family members, federal prosecutors said.

U.S. District Judge Kari Dooley ordered Dunlap to pay $1,313,322 in restitution to Medicaid as part of his sentence.

Footballs

from Page 1

what to do, and this was one of those times," Egan said.

The school is raffling the balls at $10 an entry, with proceeds going to the PTO and student activity fund. The money will ensure that students can attend field trips regardless of their families' ability to pay, Egan said.

For years, raising funds has been tough, Egan said. Maple Street School has the highest percentage of students receiving free and reduced meals in the district.

Egan talked to his friend, one of the Buccaneers' assistant video directors, about anything he could do to help and heard back just before the holidays. The friend told him he should expect a package soon.

The man, who wanted to remain anonymous, had left letters for Brady and Gronkowski at their lockers, telling them about his friend and his school in Connecticut. Egan was expecting a T-shirt or a hat, maybe a jersey from the team's third-string quarterback.

He opened the first box and saw Gronkowski's number, 87, and the signature of the former New England Patriots star, who is just as famous for his off-the-field exploits. Still trying to process his school's good fortune, Egan said he opened the other box to find a football signed by the former Patriots quarterback and seven-time Super Bowl winner, who many call "The Greatest of All Time." He noted that Brady signed the ball before he retired.

The raffle runs through April 7, and the drawing for two winners is set for April 8. As of Friday morning, $3,800 had been raised.

Jesse Leavenworth can be reached at jleavenworth@courant.com.

Workforce

from Page 1

a body made up of legislators, health care providers and advocates that advises state agencies on behavioral health issues.

The deep issues faced by Connecticut's behavioral health workforce have drawn attention in recent months, amid what has been described as an "overwhelming" crisis in pediatric mental health care. As state lawmakers, providers and advocates have looked toward solutions, many have emphasized widespread workforce issues within mental health care. Providers often describe high rates of turnover and struggles to fill open positions, largely due to inadequate compensation and burnout among staff.

As the state legislature mounts a campaign to address a wide range of issues within behavioral health care, the importance of workforce development has been front and center. One proposal, House Bill 5001, would provide licensure reciprocity for out-of-state mental health professionals, offer loan forgiveness and otherwise support recruitment and retention efforts.

Hoge, who has studied and advised on mental health workforce issues for decades, said that America has long contended with shortages in its mental health workforce. But in recent years, a combination of social and economic forces have created a "perfect storm" that has elevated the issue to "catastrophic" proportions, he said.

Even before the pandemic, America has struggled against a labor imbalance, Hoge noted. In 2018, the U.S. Department of Labor reported more job openings than unemployed people for the first time in nearly two decades — a situation further exacerbated by the so-called current "Great Resignation." Meanwhile, the deepening opioid epidemic, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ensuing mental health crisis, have created an even bleaker situation.

Hoge emphasized that behavioral health workforce issues run deeper than merely a lack of workers. They also reflect the "gutting" of publicly-funded, community-based behavioral health agencies, he said, as employees are attracted away by federally qualified health centers and hospital systems or into private practices, where salaries tend to be higher.

During the meeting, Dr. Chuck Herrick, a Nuvance Health psychiatrist, noted that even hospital systems struggle to stem the flow of providers who leave for private practice.

"What's happening, particularly with COVID-19, is that people are tired of working, hospitals are very stressful, volumes are up and their salaries are low, and they can go into private practice and they can accept cash," he said.

Other members of the council discussed various solutions to the workforce crisis, including an idea promoted by state lawmakers to provide loan forgiveness to those who enter mental health fields.

Hoge noted that while loan repayment programs have been "very influential" in attracting workers, they may not work similarly well at retaining them. However, he stressed, the workforce crisis calls for creative, immediate solutions.

"We're desperate now, so finding somebody who is committed for three years is a very, very important thing to do," he said.

Broadly, Hoge recommended widening and strengthening the workforce, including by creating expanded roles such as "peer specialist" positions within recovery programs, making training more accessible and financing systems that enable competitive compensation.

He also noted successful efforts in states across the country, including the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska, which has bolstered the state's mental health workforce, and a trust in Alaska that funds mental health programs through the proceeds of managing more than 1 million acres of land.

"Where we are now is a dire, dire need for action to move forward to stop talking about all the workforce issues and have better, concerted plans in our state and across the nation in order to address this issue," he said.

Eliza Fawcett can be reached at elfawcett@courant.com.

Suspect

from Page 1

is coordinating with the Connecticut State Police and New Britain Police Department (NBPD) with regard to the break-ins, one possible attempted break-in and/or fires that recently occurred at multiple different denominations of houses of worship in the City of New Britain, Connecticut," the message said, according to Stewart.

"Local police have arrested a suspect well-known to them and retain the lead over the ongoing investigations," the message said, according to Stewart's post. "No other incidents have been reported since the arrest. The FBI will continue to coordinate with local law enforcement and, pending further evidence collection, will determine whether federal charges are appropriate.

"The FBI is unaware of any specific, credible threat to the religious community stemming from these incidents," the post also said.

Lori Riley can be reached at lriley@courant.com.

Housing

from Page 1

with plans by Jan. 1, 2025 and develop a new plan every 10 years after that. No locality would be expected to increase its housing stock by more than 20%, the bill states.

Opponents during the recent public hearing said the bill imposes a one-size-fits-all solution on towns, puts undue burdens on certain areas to create more housing and ignores 2017 legislation that already requires towns to compose affordable housing plans, among other concerns.

The fair share bill is one of several bills focused on making housing more affordable and reforming zoning laws in Connecticut. Advocates, developers and state officials have said restrictive local zoning ordinances make it hard to build new homes, particularly multifamily housing.

Multifamily housing is typically less expensive. Housing is considered affordable if people are spending up to a third of their income on housing costs.

Connecticut lacks nearly 87,000 units of housing that are affordable and available to extremely low income renters, according to estimates from the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Affordable housing has drawn more focus in recent years, both at the state level and nationally, as housing costs have risen.

Erin Boggs, executive director of Open Communities Alliance, told legislators there are three main reasons to pass the bill: the state's "severe lack of affordable housing," local zoning methods that have led to heightened segregation, and the economic harm created by the affordable housing deficit.

There aren't enough homes for workers, and when people are spending more of their income on housing, they can't build wealth and boost the local economy, Boggs explained.

The bill is a part of an initiative called Growing Together Connecticut that Boggs' organization helped develop. The initiative includes about 30 partnering organizations.

Boggs added that the bill, if passed, puts towns in the "driver's seat," because they would be responsible for developing their own plans.

But some opponents have cited a lack of local control as one of the reasons they don't support the bill.

Michael Criss, first selectman for Harwinton, said lack of existing water and sewage infrastructure had made it difficult to build more housing in his town. He added that rather than see a new bill passed, he wanted to observe the effects of 8-30j, which passed in 2017.

The law requires towns to approve affordable housing plans every five years. The first plan is due in July.

"There's existing efforts and proven successful strategies out there," Criss said. "We're all trying to do our part to make it affordable to live within the state."

Others said the bill language was too vague.

The Connecticut Realtors' written testimony suggested completing the needs assessment before implementing action.

"Respectfully, CTR believes the language ... attempts to implement the recommendations of the study before the study is completed," the testimony states.

But advocates said the fair share model has been used with success in New Jersey.

New Jersey's fair share policy was enacted because of a 1975 court decision. While there was a period of time where it wasn't enforced, they've seen rapid development in recent years, said Alex Staropoli, director of advocacy and communications for the state's Fair Share Housing Center.

As a result of the court decision, New Jersey has built more than 70,000 units of new housing, and 50,000 more are under construction, Staropoli said in an interview.

"It helps to level that playing field a little bit and really addresses segregation in our state," Staropoli added.

Growing Together Connecticut estimates that the fair share bill could lead to the creation of up to 300,000 new units of housing and 80,000 new jobs over the next 10 years.

Roger Senserrich, communications director for Connecticut Working Families, said his organization supports the bill in part because it will help encourage economic opportunities in more diverse communities in Connecticut.

"We have built walls, using the zoning code and expensive housing, to exclude whole communities from economic opportunity. In the process, we have made our state entirely unaffordable not just for workers, but for businesses as well," Senserrich said in written testimony. "It is time that we stop putting roadblocks and restrictions on housing — and get Connecticut moving forward again."

Ginny Monk is a reporter for The Connecticut Mirror (https://ctmirror.org/).
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CORRECTION

Setting the record straight

The city of Hartford has negotiated an option to purchase the factory building at 81 Bartholomew Avenue for $2.1 million. The purchase price was incorrect in a story on **Page 1** of Sunday's Courant.

PETS UP FOR ADOPTION



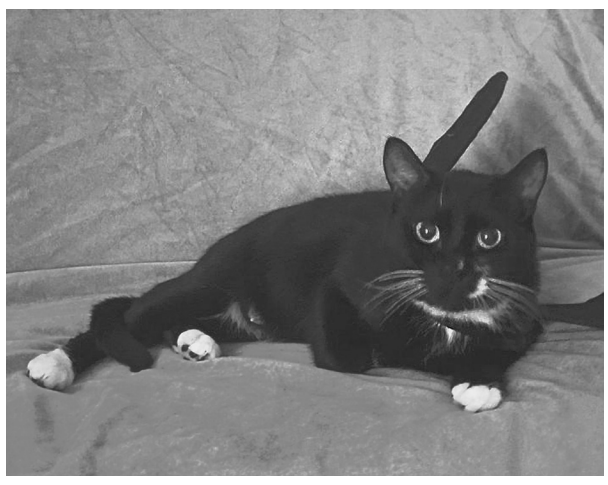
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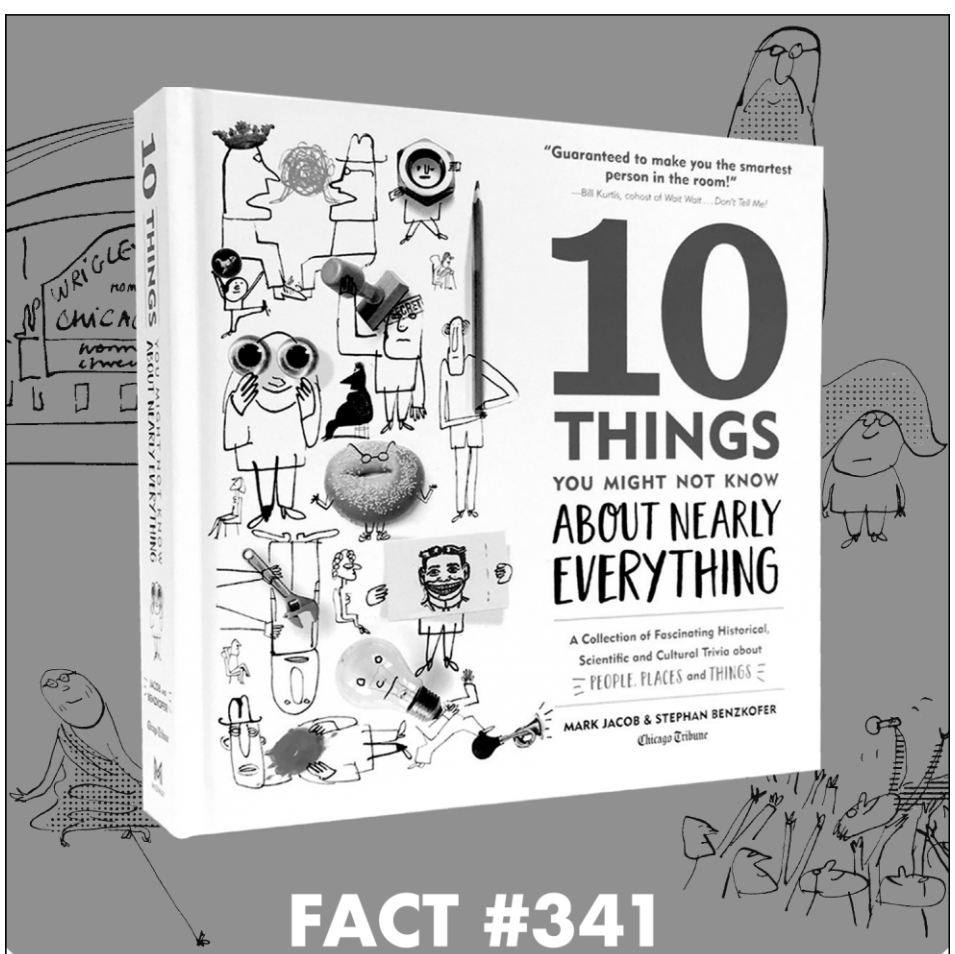
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FACT #341

The folks who brought us Reddi-wip whipped cream had another brainstorm in the 1960s: Reddi-Bacon.



10 Things You Might Not Know About Nearly Everything contains a plethora of tidbits and trivia that will appeal to everyone, from history buffs to sports fans to foodies. From lighthearted topics such as misspellings and extreme eating, to serious subjects such as WWII and prison, this book leaves readers brighter and wittier than ever before.

FACT #84: A cardigan worn by a man is sometimes called a mandigan.

FACT #178 : Genuphobia is the fear of knees.

FACT #238: Actress Marilyn Monroe colored her hair using a shade of blond called dirty pillow slip.

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Reviews of movies showing in theaters or streaming online

'THE ADAM PROJECT': What if you had a chance, as an adult, to revisit nagging issues with your parents? To reconcile with your younger self? Could it fix the past, or possibly even the future? This is the question undertaken rather literally in Shawn Levy's clever time travel flick "The Adam Project." Levy and star Ryan Reynolds recently collaborated on "Free Guy," and "The Adam Project," written by Jonathan Tropper, T.S. Nowlin, Jennifer Flackett and Mark Levin, makes similar use of Reynolds' strength as a motor-mouthed leading man, a movie star who can simultaneously pull off comedy and action hero antics. "The Adam Project" is doubly quippy with the presence of Walker Scobell, who plays Young Adam to Reynold's Big Adam, and matches him beat for beat when they meet in their respective timelines. As the film explains, "time travel exists, you just don't know it yet," asking the audience to suspend their disbelief and just go on this journey, a high-concept sci-fi action adventure that's more about the symbolic repair of father-son relationships than it's actually about time travel. 1:46 2 stars. Streaming on Netflix. *— Katie Walsh, Tribune News Service*

'AFTER YANG': In Kogonada's directorial debut, "Columbus," he explored the "modernism of the soul," through the architecture of Columbus, Indiana, and the unique connection between two strangers seeing each other, and themselves, against the backdrop of the environments they share. In his second feature film, "After Yang," Kogonada once again takes up the question of the soul and its existence in modern, even postmodern, times. But while "Columbus" was an exploration of the soul in a space, "After Yang" takes up the question of the soul throughout time. Kogonada adapted "After Yang" from the short story "Saying Goodbye to Yang" from the book "Children of the New World" by Alexander Weinstein, and the film takes place in a near future that looks a bit different, but functions in the same way. This sleekly modern world is informed by East Asian aesthetics, food and culture, and the advanced technologies are familiar: FaceTime, self-driving cars, video games, animated photo snippets. It is a world so close we might reach out touch it, and with the warm, comfortable production design by Alexandra Schaller and gauzy cinematography by Benjamin Loeb, Kogonada makes the film an almost tactile experience. 1:36. 4 stars. Streaming on Showtime. *— Katie Walsh*



A scene from the movie "Turning Red." **PIXAR/DISNEY**

'THE BATMAN': Just when you've had it with Gotham City, caped crusaders and the whole franchise, along comes a good Batman movie — easily the best since "The Dark Knight" 14 years and an entire film industry ago. "The Batman" features a solemnly effective new Bruce Wayne/Batman courtesy of Robert Pattinson. He has a superb counterpoint/frenemy/soul mate in Zoe Kravitz's Selina Kyle/Catwoman. Selina works as a nightclub hostess (vaguely defined on purpose) in a mob hangout frequented by John Turturro's Falcone, who is outfitted by sunglasses handed down, apparently, from Sam Giancana. "Oz" Cobblepot, aka The Penguin, reports to Falcone but isn't happy about the arrangement. He's played by an unrecognizable Colin Farrell. Meanwhile, Andy Serkis as Wayne's guardian Alfred Pennyworth is lovely, a naturally civilized antidote to all the hellishness swirling around him. All it takes for Gotham, aka America, to give into pure chaos, is simple: "fear, and a little focused violence," according to Paul Dano's Riddler. "The Batman," rated PG-13 but barely, plays all the sides of Gotham's mean streets more compellingly, and without mainlining the viciousness "Joker" style. I don't know if we needed "The Batman," but Matt Reeves, the director and co-writer, and company certainly elevated it. 2:56. 3 stars. *— Michael Phillips, Chicago Tribune*

'CYRANO': The new "Cyrano" movie is an eyeful; but for the ear, more like half-full. But you always take your chances with a musical adaptation of the 1897 Edmond Rostand play about the poet warrior of the title who embarks on an anguished ghostwriting project to help out his fellow soldier, Christian, at the behest of Roxanne, who has fallen in love with Christian at first sight. Peter Dinklage originated his Cyrano at the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut in 2018, then went off-Broadway in 2019. Erica Schmidt, who is married to Dinklage, directed and wrote the book for that show. Director Joe Wright enlisted her to do the screenplay for the new film, and here we have it: a swank but errant enterprise, with many confident elements very nearly making up for a movie that doesn't really benefit from song or dance. 2:04. 2 ½ stars. *— Michael Phillips*

'LUCY AND DESI': With the premiere of the documentary "Lucy and Desi" directed by Amy Poehler on Amazon, the streaming platform is home now to three projects about Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. It joins the release this past fall of the embarrassingly bad biopic from Aaron Sorkin ("Being the Ricardos" starring Nicole Kidman and Javier Bardem) and, on the other end of the spectrum, the wonderfully complex and compelling 1993 documentary "Lucy and Desi: A Home Movie," made by the couple's daughter, Lucie Arnaz. Of the three films, Poehler's effort falls somewhere in the middle, at once superfluous but sincere in its efforts to celebrate and also understand the duo who would change television forever, but had a famously difficult marriage as well, which would end, after two decades together, in 1960. 1:43. 2 ½ stars. Streaming on Amazon Prime. *— Nina Metz, Chicago Tribune*

'STUDIO 666': Horror is so hot right now, everyone wants a bite. No longer relegated to the midnight movie, the often low-budget, high-profit genre isn't just flourishing at the box office in the lingering pandemic market, it's practically saturated it. So it's no surprise that a beloved rock band, especially one as affable as the Foo Fighters might want in on the action. What they've come up with is a goofy, gory horror comedy, "Studio 666," directed by BJ McDonnell, written by Jeff Buhler and Rebecca Hughes, from a story by Foo frontman Dave Grohl. Neither funny nor scary, "Studio 666" is lacking in all tension and suspense. Not even the presence of the Horror Master himself, John Carpenter, making a cameo, or 2022's newly minted Scream Queen Jenna Ortega ("Scream," "X"), can offer true horror bona fides to this flick, while stand-up comic Whitney Cummings can't make this thing funny either. 1:46. 1 ½ stars. *— Katie Walsh*

'TURNING RED': "Turning Red" is the first Pixar feature on which a female filmmaker — co-writer and director Domee Shi — ran the show and receives sole directorial credit. In deft strokes "Turning Red" introduces the highly verbal, high-achieving, authority-pleasing Mei and her three best friends, voiced by Ava Morse, Hyein Park and Maitreyi Ramakrishnan. They're a wonderful group of varying personalities. The girls yearn to catch an upcoming concert featuring their favorite crushworthy boy band, 4-Town (inexplicably, there are five of them). Doing so requires significant deception, along with dubious fundraising methods. The larger plot development here relates to the ancient Chinese family curse causing the present-tense problems for Mei. Sandra Oh voices the role of Mei's mother, who knows more than she initially tells. "Turning Red" is pure Pixar in its imaginative clash of genres and impulses. Yet it's something new, too, its own cultural- and gender-specific creation. 1:40. 3 ½ stars. Streaming on Disney+. *— Michael Phillips*

RATINGS: The movies listed are rated according to the following key: 4 stars, excellent; 3 stars, good; 2 stars, fair; 1 star, poor.

CELEBRITIES

Scott launches event-safety initiative

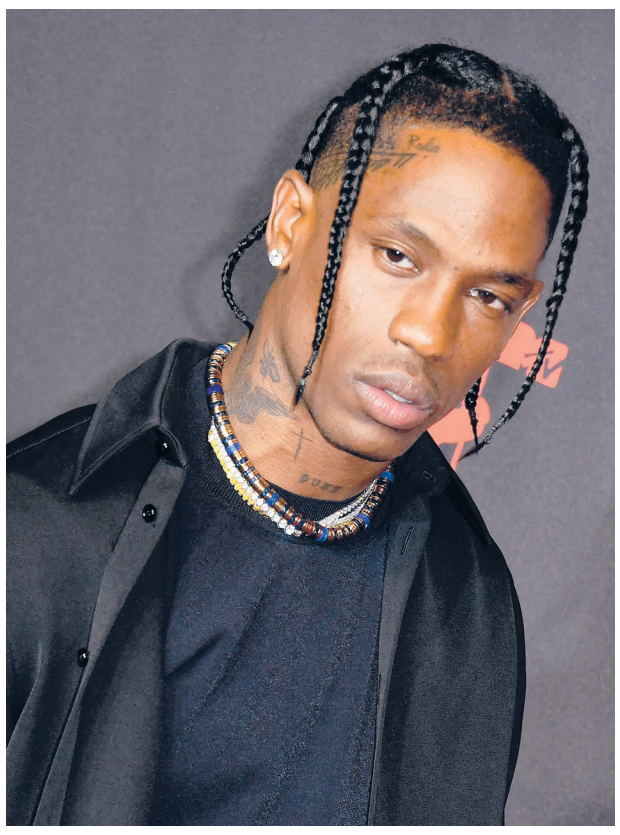
From news services

Travis Scott has launched an initiative centering on event safety after 10 people were killed at the rapper's Astroworld music festival in Houston last year. Scott recently unveiled Project Heal, a multipronged campaign encompassing an HBCU scholarship fund, a creative design education program, mental health resources and a coalition working to make live events, such as Astroworld, safer for attendees.

"I've been taking the time and space to grieve, reflect and do my part to heal my community," Scott — whose legal name is Jacques Berman Webster II — wrote on Instagram.

"Most importantly, I want to use my resources and platform moving forward towards actionable change. This will be a lifelong journey for me and my family. While it's easy for corporations and institutions to stay in the shadows, I feel as a leader in my community, I need to step up in times of need."

Scott's announcement comes several months after Astroworld concertgoers, ranging from age 9 to 27, died from compression asphyxia amid a massive crowd surge during Scott's set. Shortly after the show, 125 Astroworld victims filed a lawsuit against Scott, Apple, Live Nation and Drake, who also performed at the festival.



Travis Scott, seen Sept. 12, recently announced an initiative centering on safety at live events. **ANGELA WEISS/GETTY-AFP**

More Oscar presenters added: John Travolta, Mila Kunis and Wesley Snipes are among the latest batch of celebrities who have been added to the Academy Awards telecast, producers Will Packer and Shayla Cowan said Friday.

Lupita Nyong'o, Naomi Scott and last year's best supporting actor winner Daniel Kaluuya will also present awards at the show. They join the ranks of previously announced presenters Lady Gaga, Zoe Kravitz and Kevin Costner, and other winners from last year, Anthony Hopkins and Youn Yuh-jung, who are all expected to grace the Dolby Theater stage.

The 94th Oscars will air March 27 on ABC. Regina Hall, Amy Schumer and Wanda Sykes are hosting.

Farrell to star in Penguin series: Following the success of "The Batman," HBO Max announced that it has signed off on a straight-to-series order about the Dark Knight's nemesis the Penguin.

According to a description, the DC Comics drama will be an expansion of the scene set for "The Batman" and will center on the character played by Colin Farrell in the film.

"The world that Matt Reeves created for 'The Batman' is one that warrants a deeper gaze through the eyes of Oswald Cobblepot," Farrell said in the recent announcement. "I couldn't be more excited about continuing this exploration of Oz as he rises through the darkened ranks to become the Penguin."

In his statement, director Reeves said that Farrell "exploded off the screen" as the villain in the movie, which dominated the box office in its first week at the theaters. "Having the chance to thoroughly explore the inner life of that character ... is an absolute thrill," he added.

March 14 birthdays: Actor Michael Caine is 89. Composer Quincy Jones is 89. Actor Steve Kanaly is 76. Comedian Billy Crystal is 74. Radio personality Rick Dees is 72. Actor Tamara Tunie is 63. Actor Penny Johnson Jerald is 61. Actor Grace Park is 48. Actor Chris Klein is 43. Musician Taylor Hanson is 39. Bassist Este Haim is 36.



ASK AMY

By Amy Dickinson

askamy@amydickinson.com Twitter@askingamy

Political talk has friend fed up with ranting

Dear Readers: Every year I step away from my column for two weeks to work on other creative projects. I hope you enjoy these "Best Of" columns from 10 years ago. Today's topic: politics.

Dear Amy: The community I live in has many people who are so rabid and strident in their political positions that they can't seem to shut up about it.

I feel strongly about issues that are important to me, too, but I do not enjoy listening to people ranting.

I recently had lunch with friends, and one woman, "Barbara," launched into politics (as usual). When I pointed out that "friends who don't talk politics stay friends," Barbara laughed it off and continued her diatribe. At this point, I don't think she can help herself. Is my only option to quit having lunch with Barbara and others like her?

— Fed Up

Dear Fed Up: If everyone in a group is engaged in a spirited discussion that is dominated by one topic, then you'd be wise to hop on board rather than try to dictate what people can discuss in your presence. You can try to control the conversation through diverting it to a topic you find interesting but really the primary requirement in polite company is that people remain civil. If you find that an individual (or group) consistently rants about a predictable dominant topic that you aren't interested in, and that every social gathering seems like a political conclave, then you'll want to avoid this company, at least until after the November election.

Dear Amy: We are friends with an older couple who live down the street. In all the years I've known them, we've never discussed politics. Maybe that was a good thing, because in the past few weeks a sign appeared in their yard for a candidate I cannot stand.

If this candidate should happen to win, I would seriously think about moving to another country.

I'm gay, and my neighbors know it. Prejudice against gay people is a plank in their candidate's political platform.

I tell myself that my neighbors are the same people I've liked for many years, but I feel differently now. Should I talk to them about it and try to explain what this man's election would mean for people like me, or should I ignore it?

I know past slights fade with time, but I hate feeling this way.

— Confused Neighbor

Dear Confused: Your neighbors have posted a yard sign advertising their support for a candidate, inviting a conversation with people who see it.

The question is whether you are up to having this conversation with them.

Your neighbors may not be aware of this candidate's stand on gay issues. They may be aware of it but might not vote on social issues. Or they may agree with this candidate's views.

If you choose to speak to them, approach them with an open attitude, tolerance and a determination to listen. This is an attitude you would want from anyone questioning your own political views.

Sophisticated people living in a country devoted to free speech should be able to tolerate different — or even offensive — perspectives without wanting to leave the country, but you don't seem able to see things this way. This is something for you to work on.

Dear Amy: My friend "S" and I have been friends since sixth grade — almost 40 years ago!

I'm politically conservative, and S is a diehard Democrat. I have been posting political items on my Facebook page, in favor of my presidential choice.

Recently, S sent me a private message saying she has temporarily "unfriended" me because she doesn't want to see all of my political drivel. She ended her message by saying that she will "see me back online after November."

How can I accept a friend request from her after the election and allow things to go back to normal, after she basically kicked me to the curb?

— Sad, Angry, Confused

Dear Sad: Your friend S could have handled this in a way other than by "unfriending" you. She could adjust her Facebook settings to "hide" your postings until after the election and you would be none-the-wiser.

But S isn't really kicking you to the curb. She is rejecting your candidate.

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TV REVIEW

Thriller 'Pieces of Her' is an involving roller-coaster ride

By Robert Lloyd
Los Angeles Times



Toni Collette, left, and Bella Heathcote in "Pieces of Her."
MARK ROGERS/NETFLIX

"Pieces of Her," now on Netflix and based on the 2018 Karin Slaughter novel of the same name, is a tidy and effective thriller without much to say about the state of anything at all. The ratio of violence to running time is low, which is welcome, and there is barely any sex, which is reasonable enough for a story whose characters are more worried about being killed than hooking up and whose most important relationship is that of mother and daughter. And that too is a kind of relief.

The series, developed by Charlotte Stoudt ("Homeland") and directed in its entirety by Minkie Spiro ("The Plot Against America"), keeps you moving along, even when you have to work a little to make sense of it — or when, seemingly about to end, it reveals a new set of twists and turns, and sets you thinking about problems of pacing in the eight-hour narrative universe.

Toni Collette plays Laura, a speech therapist in the sleepy, sandy community of Belle Isle, Georgia; Bella Heathcote is her daughter Andy, who came down from New York when Laura was undergoing cancer treatment and has stuck around, working nights as a police dispatcher and living in Laura's back house.

As they sit in a diner on Andy's 30th birthday, there is a shooting, and in the ensuing chaos, in order to protect her daughter (who, wearing her uniform, becomes a target), Laura turns for a moment into Carrie Mathison, or Mrs. Peel, or any super-spy or special forces agent whose name you would like to write in.

"If someone threatens your child you do anything to protect them; something just kicks in," she will tell a seemingly skeptical police detective, which is the point of the story but also just a fragment of the Whole Truth. For as the incident becomes national news, it quickly grows clear to the viewer that Laura has been hiding out and that this bit of unwanted publicity has put her, and Andy, in danger. That danger arrives with absurd swiftness, setting off a story that moves from Georgia to Alabama to Texas to San Francisco and back to the 1980s, including an interlude in Oslo, where various events set the gears turning that will ultimately explain what we're seeing in the present.

In spite of its stretch-limousine length, "Pieces of Her" does its work in a mostly classic, even Hitchcockian fashion, telling a story about an ordinary person who finds herself caught up in a mystery and on the run, with the signal difference that Hitchcock was not interested in the emotional dynamic of mothers and daughters.

Some of the payoffs seem a little too tidy; but they are tidy, at least. There are a few minor holes left unplugged, possibly as beside the point, and a couple of motivations that seem insufficiently accounted for, in real-world terms, to make sure that certain characters will meet again.

Although there are more than enough questions to draw you to the end — and there is a certain amount of just getting to the end involved in any eight-hour mystery — what makes "Pieces of Her" something better than just a diverting entertainment are the central performances and the mother-daughter story that exists both within and without the thriller. The series is most satisfying when Collette and Heathcote, each embodying her own particular mix of exhaustion and resolution, are together on-screen — it adds an ordinary emotional component often missing from thrillers. And though events will keep them mostly apart, the viewer's desire to reunite them, ultimately the point of the story, keeps this journey into genre compelling.

Where to watch: Netflix

HOROSCOPES

Tarot.com

Aries (March 21-April 19): Dancing in the sun might sound great right now, but your responsibilities could unexpectedly appear to trip you up. It'll remind you that there are still pressing matters to tend to. Roll up your sleeves and get to work, then you can return to having fun.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): You generally know what you're about, Taurus, but even you can surprise yourself every so often. The emotional sector is urging you to do nothing more than feather your nest but also causing a seismic shift in the wind. The more you try and confine yourself, the more you'll want to break free.

Gemini (May 21-June 20): Your words and your thoughts might not sync up as well as normal, adding to your natural urge to say whatever you want. It's a good idea to be extra careful when interacting with others, because under this energy you could easily stick your foot in your mouth.

Cancer (June 21-July 22): You can be as responsible as possible, but that doesn't mean that other people will be on the same page. Productivity can last until your social sector brings your friends to your attention. If you have time to play, then go play — but work might come first.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Following your own path could seem enticing — that is until someone else shows up and demands you follow theirs. A last-minute work assignment could come through, or you'll realize you simply have to follow someone else's rules, rather than your own. You can't call all the shots today!

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): This is the kind of day when you can't quite see where you're going — even if you're usually an excellent planner. These opportunities could feel a bit jarring as you won't have much say in them. While this growth may not be comfortable, it might bring something fantastic your way in the end.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You might feel a dissonance between what you show people and what you wish to hold back. Wanting to get out and see people is absolutely fine, but beware of letting it all hang out at once! You're likely going to overstep your own boundaries if you're too familiar with others.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Some of your big goals could be disrupted by the agendas of others at this time. Instead of looking elsewhere for validation, keep your opinions to yourself, because people might not be as supportive as you would like. Consider working on your own!

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Adventure may call your name today, making you happy to chase after your dreams as far as they might take you. There are possibilities out in the great wide yonder. A responsibility could pop up and demand your immediate attention, forcing your escapades onto the backburner. Watch out!

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your world could feel smaller than usual today, giving you the urge to put up walls. Accept that your feelings are going to fluctuate and try not to have unrealistic emotional expectations for yourself. You could have lots of fun if you stop trying to control every moment and let life happen.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A strange note in the air may keep you on your toes today. Hanging out with an important plus-one might get waylaid by the needs of family or a concern around the house. You could turn this into an opportunity to entertain at your place, turning two problems into one solution.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Today you might find yourself wearing lots of different hats from one minute to the next, helping you understand your own needs. Keep an open mind and pad your schedule with lots of space. You'll need to be ready for many different outcomes.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Associated Press

On March 14, 1879, Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Germany.

In 1964, a jury in Dallas found Jack Ruby guilty of murdering Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, and sentenced him to death.

In 1990, the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies held a secret ballot that elected Mikhail S. Gorbachev to a new, powerful presidency.

In 2011, Neil Diamond, Alice Cooper, Tom Waits, Darlene Love, Dr. John and Leon Russell were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In 2015, Robert Durst, a wealthy eccentric linked to two killings and his wife's disappearance, was arrested by the FBI on a murder warrant.

In 2018, Stephen Hawking, the best-known theoretical physicist of his time, died at his home in Cambridge, England, at the age of 76.



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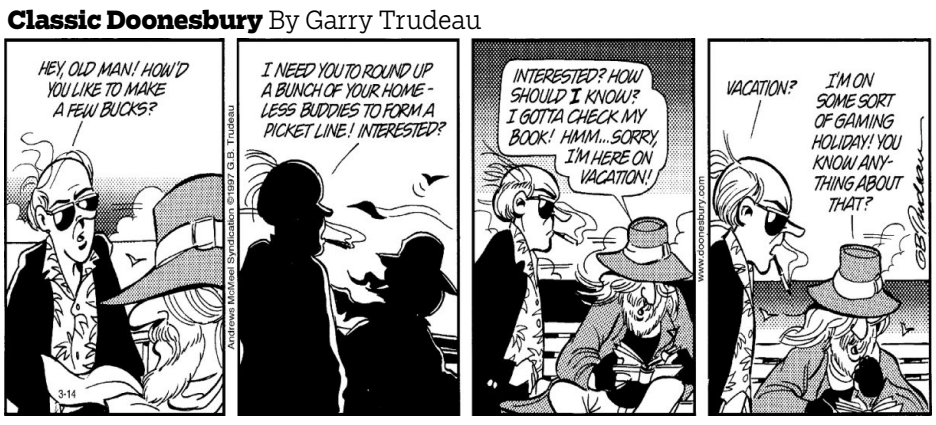
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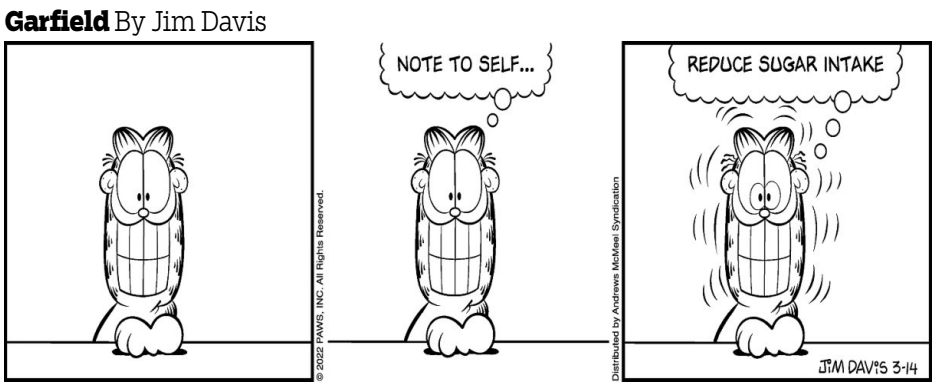
Peanuts By Charles M. Schulz



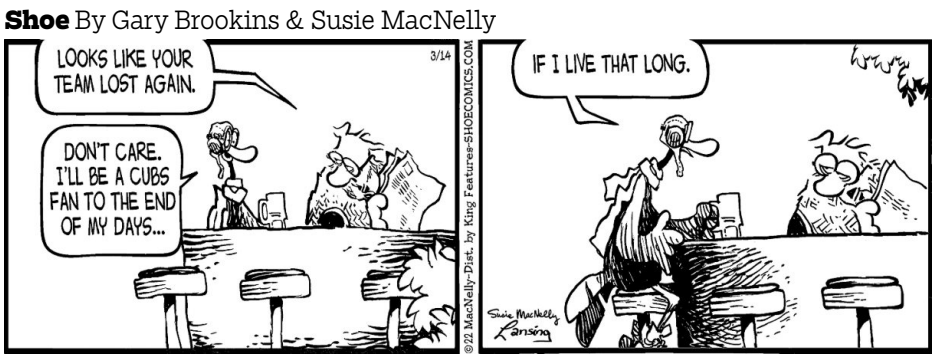
Classic Doonesbury By Garry Trudeau



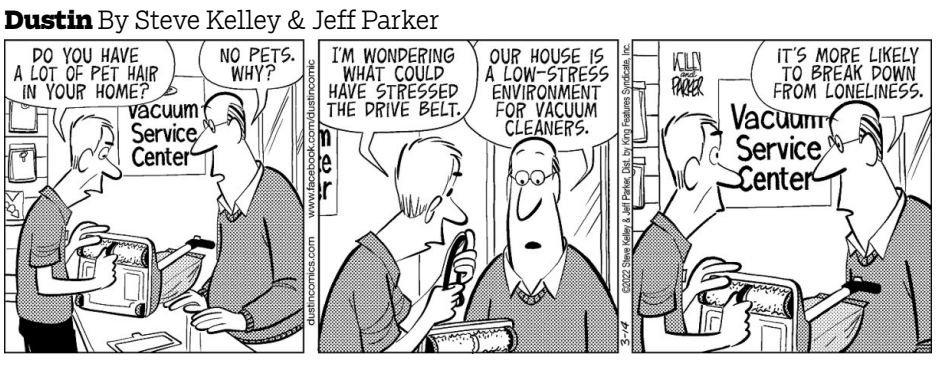
Garfield By Jim Davis



Shoe By Gary Brookins & Susie MacNelly



Dustin By Steve Kelley & Jeff Parker



Pearls Before Swine By Stephan Pastis



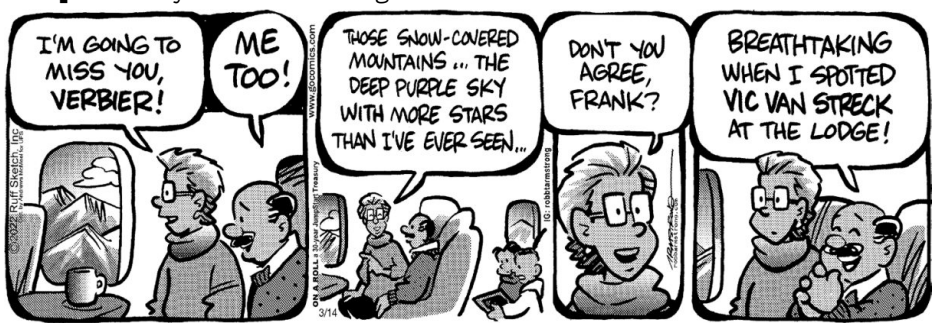
Mutts By Patrick McDonnell



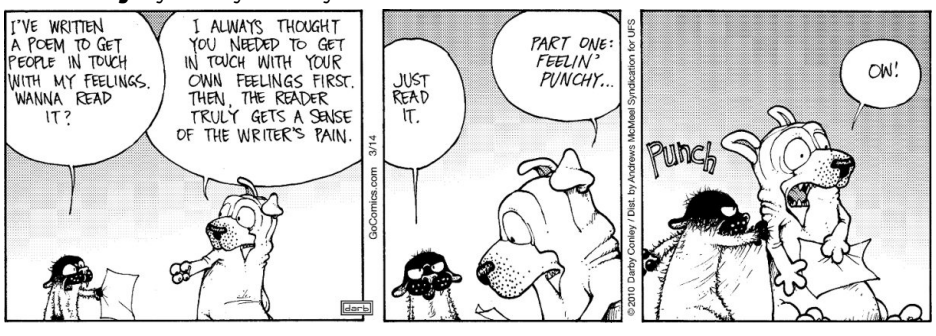
Arctic Circle By Alex Hallatt



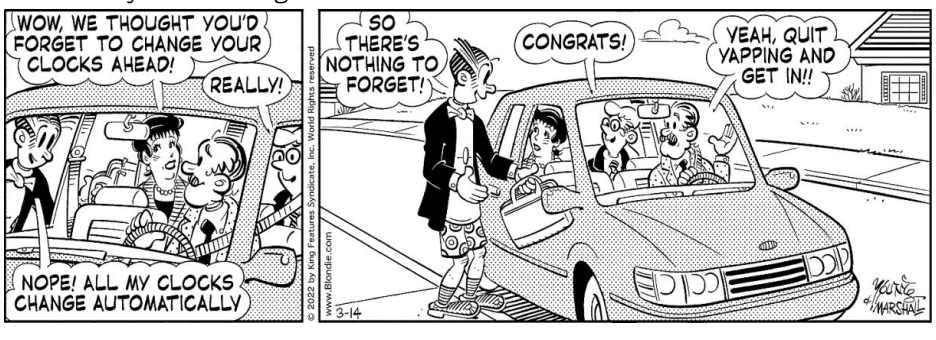
Jump Start By Robb Armstrong



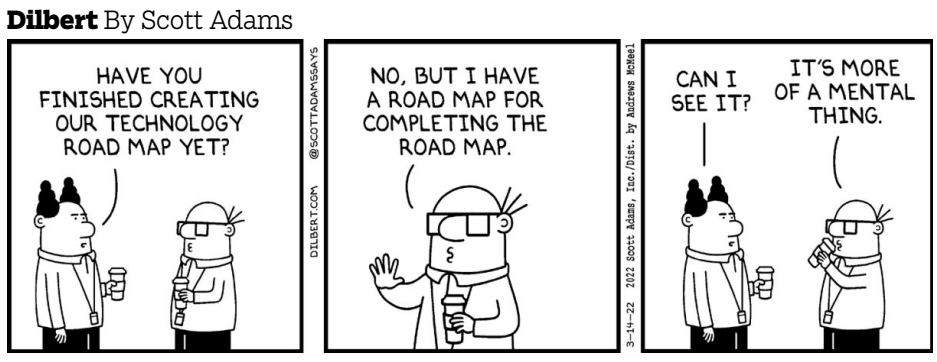
Get Fuzzy By Darby Conley



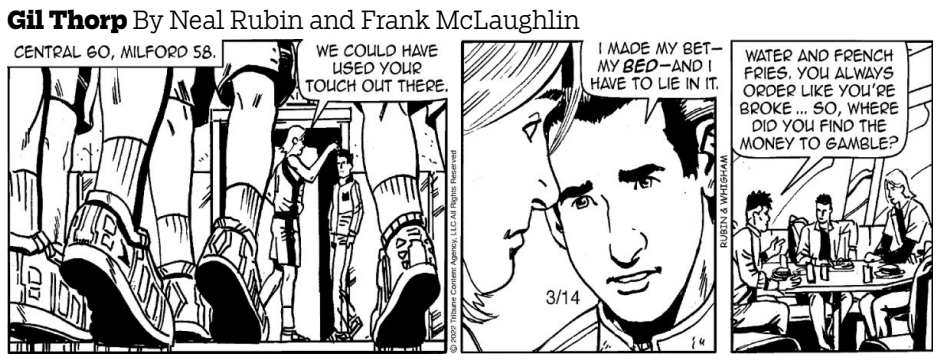
Blondie By Dean Young and John Marshall



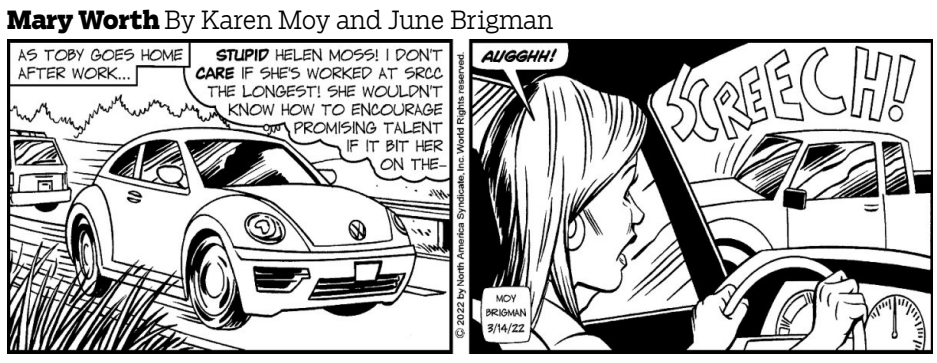
Dilbert By Scott Adams



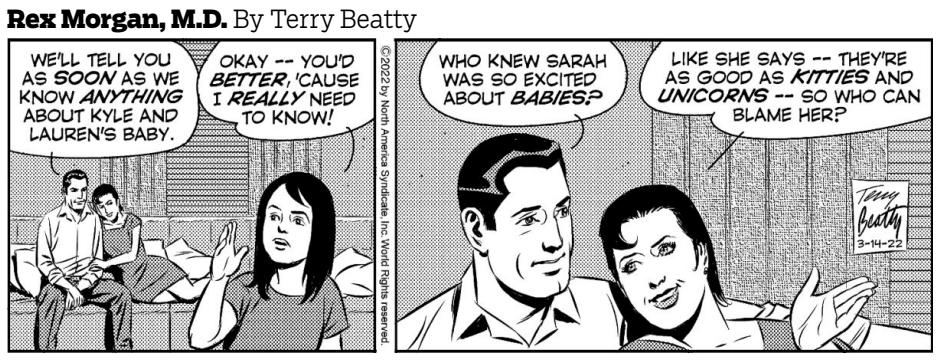
Gil Thorp By Neal Rubin and Frank McLaughlin



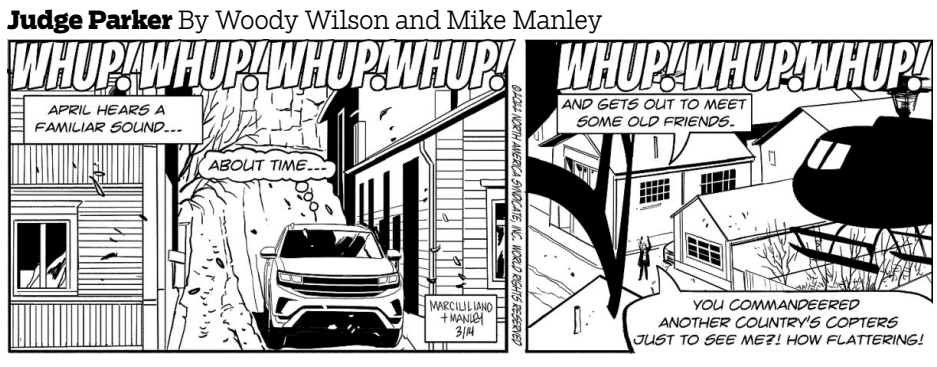
Mary Worth By Karen Moy and June Brigman



Rex Morgan, M.D. By Terry Beatty



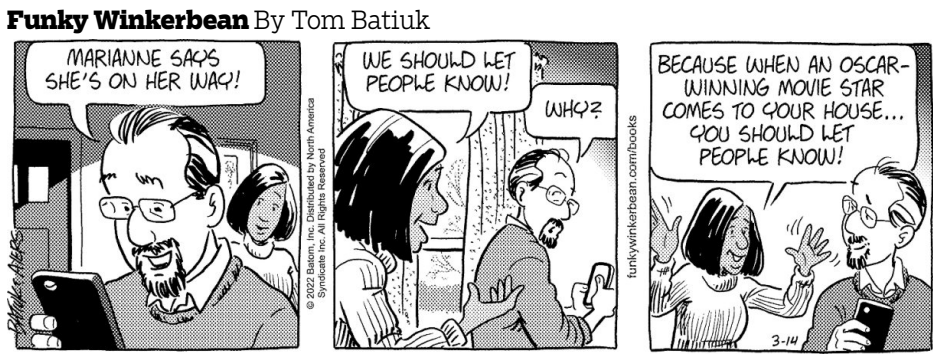
Judge Parker By Woody Wilson and Mike Manley



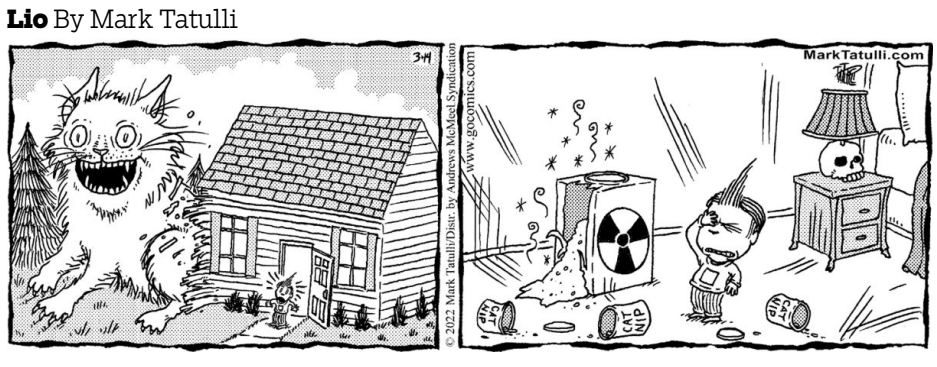
Baldo By Cantu and Castellanos



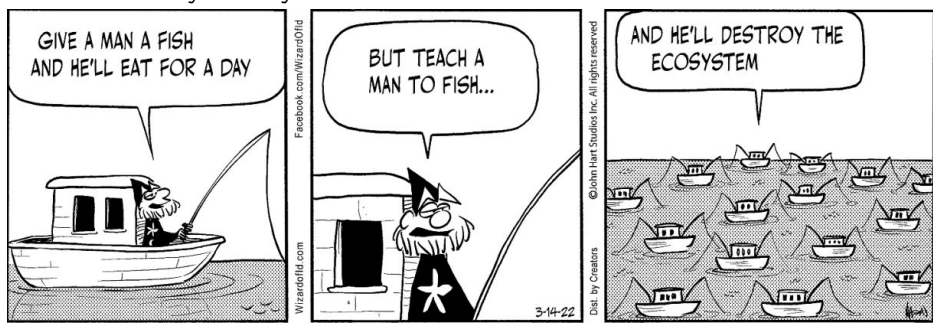
Funky Winkerbean By Tom Batiuk



Lio By Mark Tatulli



Wizard Of Id By Johnny Hart and Brant Parker



Rhymes With Orange By Hilary Price



Blondie By Dean Young and John Marshall

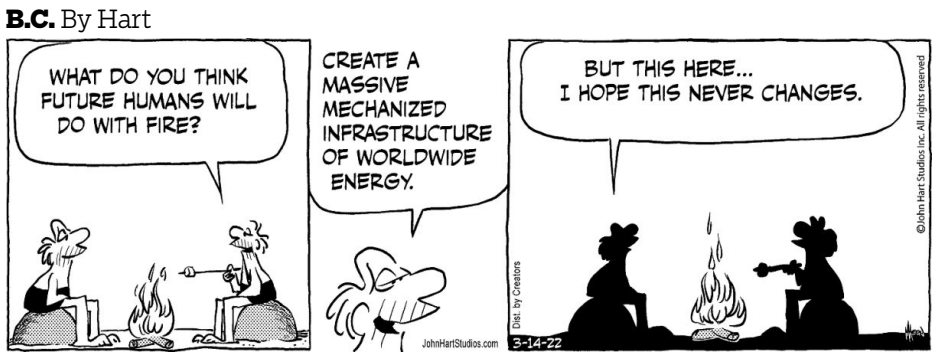
Monty By Jim Meddick



For Better Or For Worse By Lynn Johnston



B.C. By Hart



Beetle Bailey by Mort, Greg & Brian Walker



Hi & Lois By Greg and Brian Walker and Chance Browne



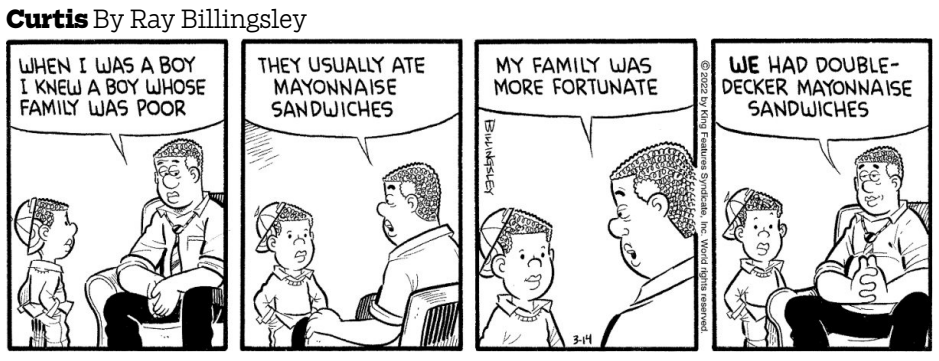
Hagar The Horrible By Chris Browne



Non Sequitur By Wiley Miller



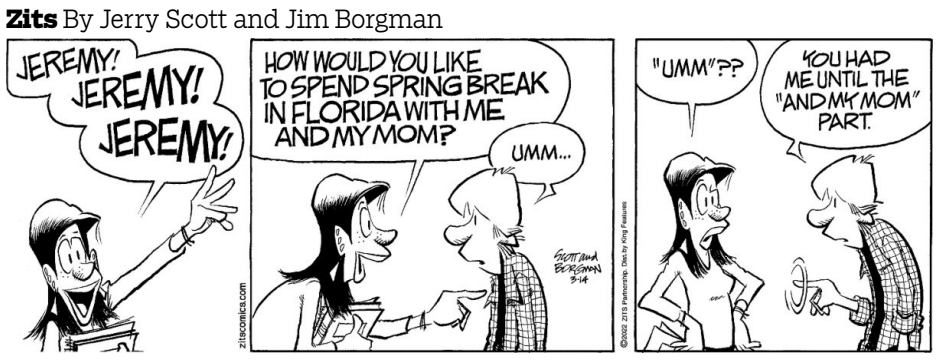
Curtis By Ray Billingsley



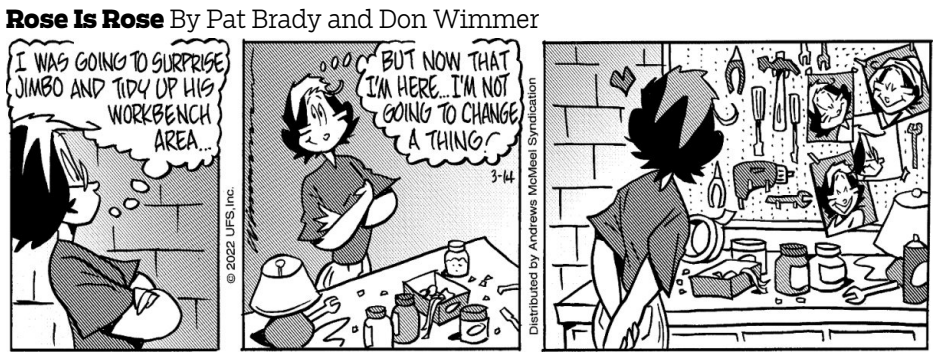
Pickles By Brian Crane



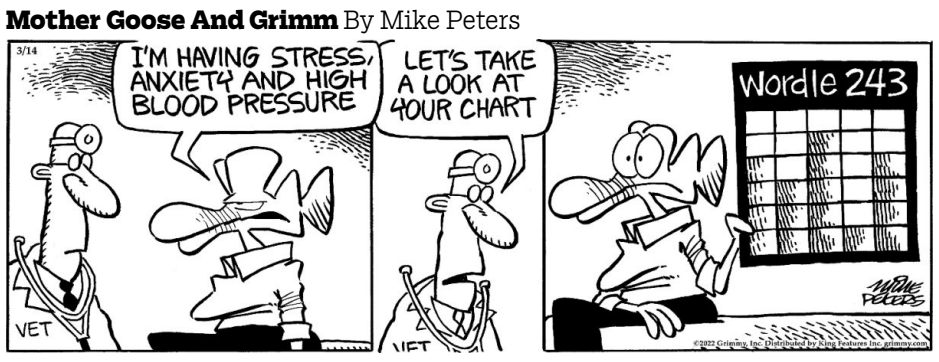
Zits By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman



Rose Is Rose By Pat Brady and Don Wimmer



Mother Goose And Grimm By Mike Peters



CROSSWORD

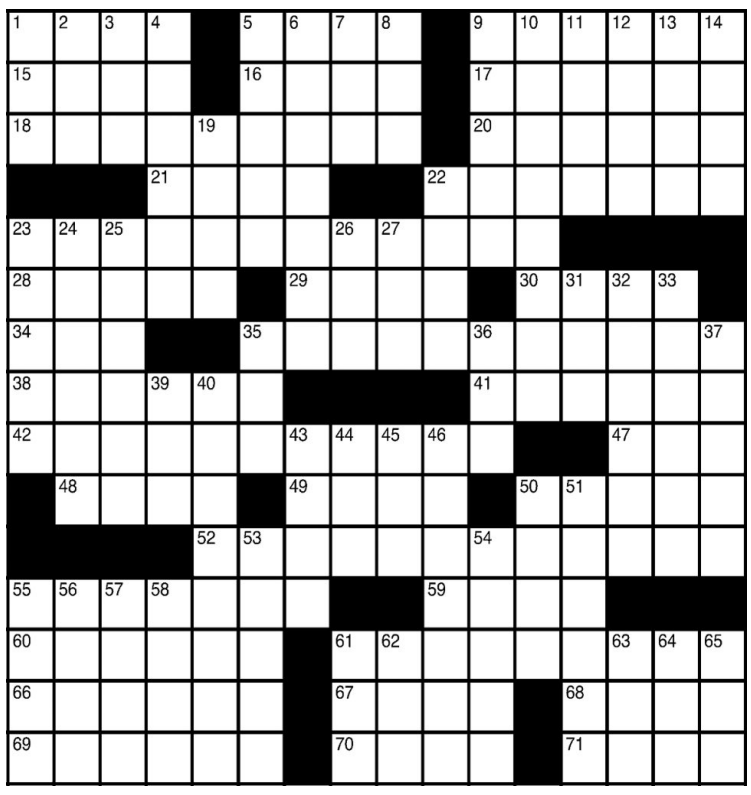
EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

Across

1 South America's westernmost mainland point is in it
5 Not that
9 James of "The Blacklist"
15 "Sign me up!"
16 Call at third base
17 Printing mistakes
18 Remark that may elicit "None taken"
20 Line dance step
21 Coffee dispensers
22 Garnish for a margarita
23 Ride with wooden horses
28 Singer with numbered albums
29 Advance to repay
30 Check no.
34 Drips started by RNs
35 "Let's change the subject"
38 Network with science shows, familiarly
41 Listened to, as advice
42 St. Patrick's day shout
47 Clean-up hitter's stat
48 Walgreens product
49 Gaseous: Pref.
50 Short
52 Without a care in the world
55 President Hoover
59 Company that's "calling"
60 Picture next to a username
61 Intermediary ... or a hint to 23-, 35-, 42- and 52-Across
66 Poet Pablo with a Nobel Prize
67 Real hassle
68 Wheel shaft
69 Formal, as an affair
70 Crafts partner
71 Oxen connector

Down

1 Wrestling win
2 Moody genre
3 Carnival city
4 Roll out, as a flag
5 Former LPGA #1 golfer Yani __
6 Jabba the Hutt foe
7 Conditions
8 "Understand?"
9 Take effect
10 High school corsage wearer
11 Greek war god
12 Facts and figures
13 List-ending abbr.
14 Unable to look away
19 Boots brand
22 Ladder step
23 Stephen King's home state
24 "The Scream" artist Munch
25 Mix again
26 Harry's pal Weasley
27 Cheerios bit
31 Michael of "SNL"
32 __ the Entertainer
33 Beloved "Jeopardy!" host
35 __-wop music
36 "I get it now"
37 Enlighten
39 Wildebeest
40 Brainiacs
43 Protestant denom.
44 Dem.'s foe
45 Suffix with custom
46 Data transfer measure
50 Inky stain
51 Model's sashaying path
53 Wide assortment
54 Appliances that may be Dutch
55 "Give me a __": "Help!"
56 At any time
57 Like many collectibles
58 A/C units
61 3.0, e.g.: Abbr.
62 Rowing tool
63 Prefix with skeleton
64 Deer in a lodge logo
65 Hillary Clinton, __ Rodham



By Zachary David Levy — Tribune Content Agency 3/14/22

BRIDGE

BY STEVE BECKER

West dealer.
East-West vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ K Q 7 3
♥ Q 8 3
♦ Q 10 4
♣ 10 5 4

WEST
♠ 10 5 4 2
♥ A 10 9 7 4 2
♦ K J 2
♣ —

EAST
♠ J 9 8 6
♥ J 5
♦ A 9 8 6
♣ K 7 6

SOUTH
♠ A
♥ K 6
♦ 7 5 3
♣ A Q J 9 8 3 2

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♦(!)
1 ♥	1 ♠	1 NT	3 NT(!!)

Opening lead — seven of hearts.

Famous hand

Board No. 54 of the 1959 Italy-U.S. match was the most amazing deal of the tournament. The contract at both tables was three notrump, and the opening lead was also the same. With best defense, it seemed that the contract would go down one.

However, the Italian declarer finished down six, while the U.S. declarer wound up with two overtricks!

These strange doings require some explanation. When Giorgio Belladonna became declarer for Italy after the auction shown, he won the heart lead with the king and played the A-Q of clubs, which held. He then led another club, taken by Ivar Stakgold (East) with the king.

When Stakgold next returned the five of hearts, Belladonna played a diamond! Leonard Harmon (West) naturally assumed East had the only missing heart, so he allowed dummy to win with the queen.

At this point, North asked Belladonna whether he had any hearts. Belladonna said yes, and the director was called. He ruled, in accordance with the Laws, that South must substitute the heart six for the diamond three. Harmon was allowed to change his play — as stipulated by the Laws — from the heart nine to the heart ace.

But dummy's queen play could not be changed, since it was a legal play. So Harmon cashed five heart tricks, and Belladonna eventually finished down six.

At the other table, Harry Fishbein was South for the U.S. He won the heart lead with the king and also played the A-Q-J of clubs.

East took the king and could have defeated the contract by returning a spade, but he led a heart instead.

West won with the ace and returned a heart, and Fishbein had nine tricks. Both defenders then kept their spades as the clubs were run, so Fishbein won the last two tricks with the 7-5 of diamonds!

Tomorrow: A matter of priorities.

JUMBLE

BY DAVID HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

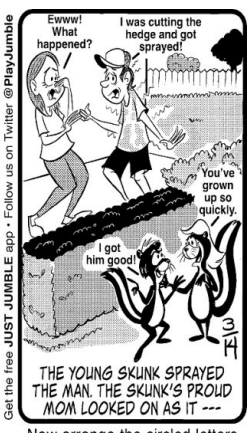
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SIDYA

CERIP

WAUSKQ

GEMTNA



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: MESSY FLUKE COOKIE SIDING
Answer: The clairvoyant doctor had a — "SICK" SENSE

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TODAY'S SUDOKU

7				1				3
	4			8				
	5				2	9		
6				4			7	2
		9		3		1		
2	7			5				9
		6	1				4	
				2			6	
3				6				5

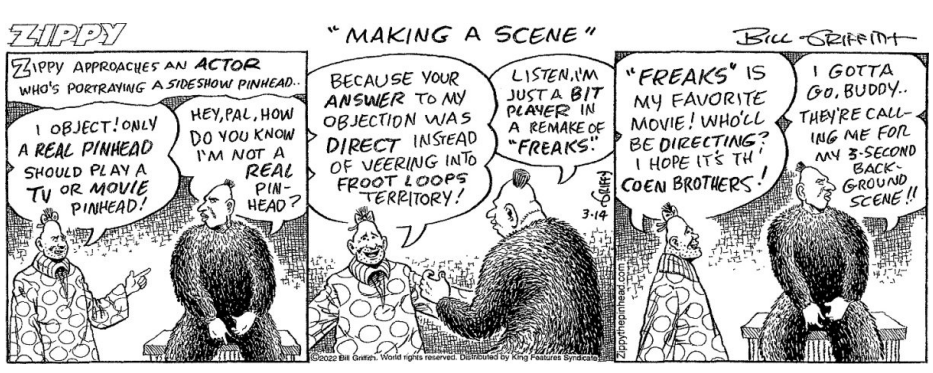
Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit **www.sudoku.org.uk**

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

5	3	4	9	2	1	7	8	6
1	6	2	4	7	8	9	5	3
9	8	7	5	3	6	4	2	1
8	2	9	7	6	4	1	3	5
4	1	6	3	5	2	8	9	7
7	5	3	1	8	9	2	6	4
3	7	8	2	1	5	6	4	9
2	4	5	6	9	7	3	1	8
6	9	1	8	4	3	5	7	2

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

U	R	S	A	M	A	J	O	R		H	A	L	T	S
R	A	Y	R	O	M	A	N	O		O	B	E	A	H
L	I	F	E	S	A	V	E	R		O	S	A	K	A
S	L	Y		A	N	A	L	Y	S	T		D	I	G
			L	I	D	S			T	O	X	I	N	
M	A	G	I	C	A		C	L	A	W	I	N	G	
E	L	U	L		G	R	E	E	N	L	I	G	H	T
A	L	I		D	O	O	D	A	D	S		M	E	H
D	O	L	L	A	R	M	E	N	U		B	E	A	U
	S	T	O	R	M	E	D		P	A	I	N	T	S
	A	T	S	E	A			I	C	E	D			
C	U	R		I	N	C	O	L	O	R		S	P	F
A	R	I	E	S		O	B	A	M	A	C	A	R	E
G	U	P	T	A		M	O	N	I	T	O	R	E	D
E	S	S	A	Y		P	E	A	C	E	N	I	K	S



BONUS PUZZLE PAGE

An extra array of word games, search and Jumble. Want more? Play online at ***PlayJumble.com***

Scan QR code to play online.

SUDOKU

7							6	
3	1	9			8		2	5
	8			1	5			
				6				
5			9		3			7
				2				
				5			9	
9	2		8			7	1	3
	3							6

Level: 1 2 3 4

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit *www.sudoku.org.uk.*

6	8	5	2	9	7	1	3	4
3	1	7	9	4	8	5	2	9
4	9	2	1	5	3	8	7	6
8	3	6	4	2	5	7	9	1
7	4	1	3	8	9	2	6	5
2	5	9	7	6	1	3	4	8
9	7	3	5	1	4	9	8	2
5	2	4	8	7	6	9	1	3
1	6	8	9	3	2	4	5	7

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WORD SEARCH

Wordsearch: jobs

316

Can you find all the words hidden in the grid? Read backwards or forwards, up or down, or diagonally. The words will always be in a straight line. Cross them off the list as you find them.

C B R E T I R W A I T E R M O D E L
N P T N A T N U O C C A U D I T O R
U R O N R R B L O O C A R E M R A F
R E A E U O K A R T I S T R L Z U D
S V V Y T T R J N E K R E L C B T U
E I D J O C K E Y K T K P G H U H X
D R A U G O M R D P E S F C E Y O S
M D N G V D K O I L K R I H F E R R
D R C R E Y A L K C I R B R S R A B
W E E O J U O I M R C U M E R C W R
E H R C Q T J A O A R Y B T I A O N
N C N E P R T T R S G R S V Y T B E
G T V R O E I P O H E I R B C W S D
I U Z T A C E L C G T E C E O A A R
N B I C I N D A A N Y O R I I K K A
E D H L T I O N E W M I G L A O U W
E E O E E C A D A Y D Z O N X N E C
R S R R R M T L Q S U R V E Y O R B

ACCOUNTANT
ARTIST
AUDITOR
AUTHOR
BANKER
BARRISTER
BRICKLAYER
BUILDER
BUTCHER
BUYER
CARPENTER
CHEF
CLERK
COACH
COOL
DANCER
DENTIST
DIRECTOR
DIVER
DOCTOR
DRIVER
EDITOR
ENGINEER
FARMER
GROCER
GUARD
JOCKEY
LAWYER
MAGICIAN
MANAGER
MODEL
NURSE
PILOT
POET
SAILOR
SOLDIER
SOLICITOR
SURVEYOR
TAILOR
TEACHER
VICAR
WAITER
WARDEN
WRITER

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BOGGLE

Boggle® BrainBusters!™

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

O	G	E	K
N	R	B	R
I	Z	T	M
E	O	T	I

BUPH WOIS GOKE AGLM

INSTRUCTIONS: Find as many words as you can by linking letters up, down, side-to-side and diagonally, writing words on a blank sheet of paper. You may only use each letter box once within a single word. Play with a friend and compare word finds, crossing out common words.

BOGGLE® POINT SCALE	YOUR BOGGLE® RATING
3 letters = 1 point	151+ = Champ
4 letters = 2 points	101-150 = Expert
5 letters = 3 points	61-100 = Pro
6 letters = 4 points	31 - 60 = Gamer
7 letters = 6 points	21 - 30 = Rookie
8 letters = 10 points	11 - 20 = Amateur
9+ letters = 15 points	0 - 10 = Try again

Boggle® BrainBusters Bonus

We put special brain-busting words into the grid of letters. Can you find them?

Find AT LEAST FOUR MUPPETS in the grid of letters.

_____

_____

_____

_____

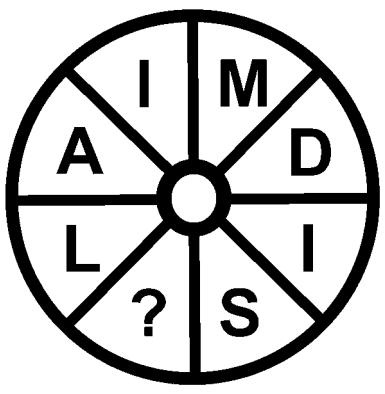
BERT ERNIE GONZO KERMIT

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12-20-19

www.bogglebrainbusters.com

WordWheel



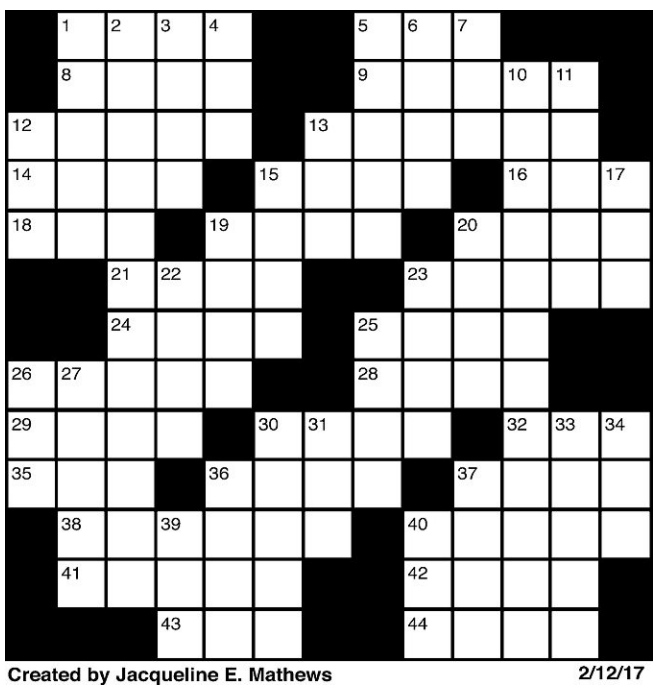
Insert the missing letter to complete an eight-letter word reading clockwise or counterclockwise.

DISCLAIM

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TV CROSSWORD

by Jacqueline E. Mathews



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 2/12/17

ACROSS

1 Tim Daly's sister
5 "Leah Remini: __ All Relative"
8 One of Donald Duck's nephews
9 Actor Clark
12 Boldness; chutzpah
13 Muscle that bends a limb
14 One of the Great Lakes
15 Woodwind instrument
16 "__ Race"; movie for Whoopi Goldberg
18 __ Moines, Iowa
19 The Bee Gees, for example
20 Walking stick
21 Sherman Hemsley sitcom
23 "__ Barbara"
24 City near Lake Tahoe
25 Czech or Slovak
26 West Point student
28 Singer Tennille
29 As blind as __
30 Try to lose
32 Mrs. in Madrid
35 Street paver's goo
36 "The Company You __"; Robert Redford movie
37 Make a tiny cut
38 "What Not __"
40 "__ Dad"
41 "The Main __"; movie for Barbra Streisand
42 "True __"; John Wayne film
43 Ultimate degree
44 Bernie and others

DOWN

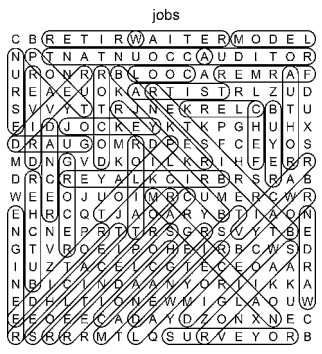
1 "__ Will Be Blood"; movie for Daniel Day-Lewis
2 Actor on "Chicago Fire"
3 Actress Campbell
4 "Eagle __"; movie for Shia LaBeouf
5 House for Nanook of the North
6 "One __ Hill"
7 "__ and the City"
10 Actor on "Timeless"
11 "Lou __"
12 "__ and Stacey"
13 "The __"; Efrem Zimbalist Jr. series
15 "Deal __ Deal"
17 Actress Leoni
19 Camp shelter
20 James or Scott
22 "__ the Press"
23 Job opening
25 "__ by Step"
26 "The __ in the Hat"; movie for Mike Myers
27 Subside; diminish
30 "__ at a Funeral"; Chris Rock film
31 Suffix for class or boss
33 Street uprisings
34 Spring month: abbr.
36 Clark __; role on "Smallville"
37 Gilbert or Rue
39 Ming-Na __
40 "The Wizard of Oz" production co.

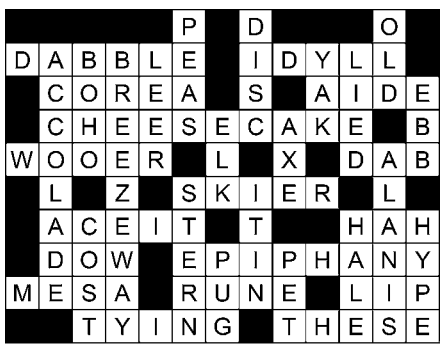


2/19/17

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jobs





P O R C E L A I N

JUMBLE

JUMBLE®

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TEPYT

VOEEK

MOSCUT

NIDTAY

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Check out the new, free JUST JUMBLE app

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



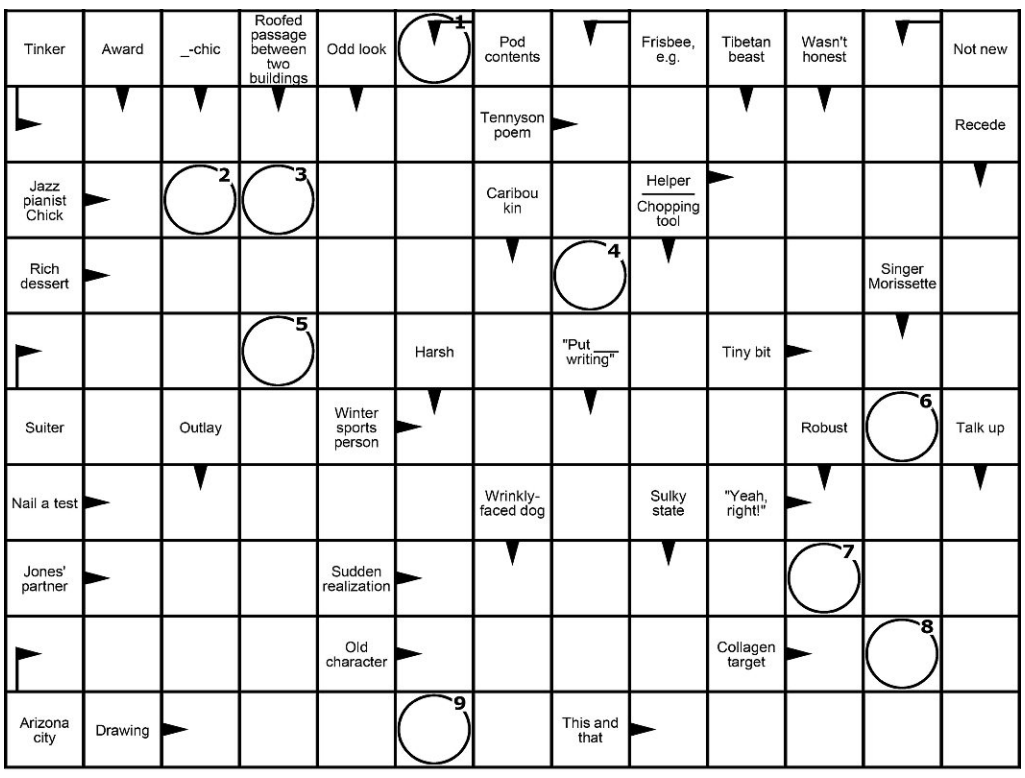
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: ( ) ( ) ( ) - ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

Jumbles: PETTY EVOKE CUSTOM DAINTY
Answer: After being so rude to the doctor, he was about to become an — OUT-PATIENT

ARROW WORDS

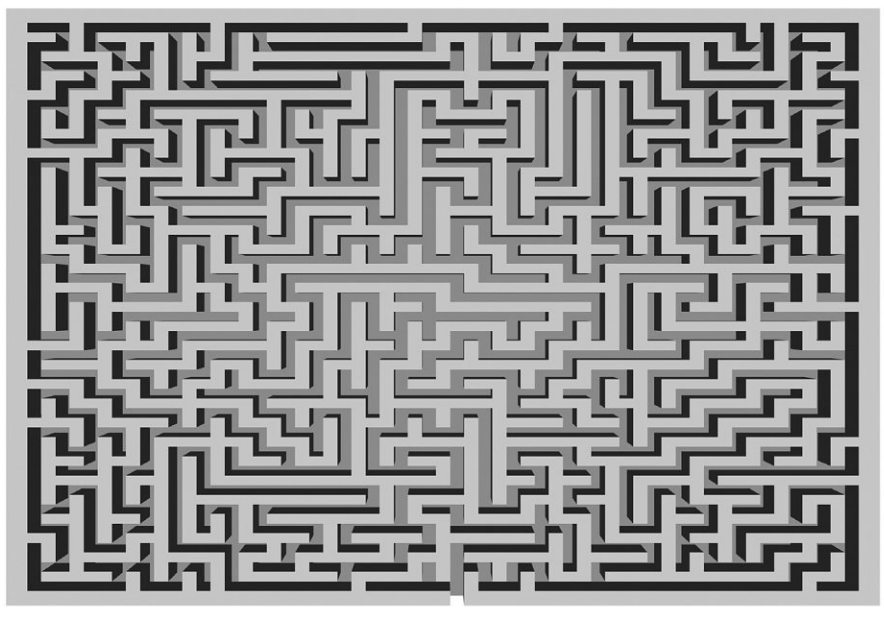
Fill in the grid using the clues provided in the direction of the arrows. When complete, unscramble the letters in the circles to reveal a mystery word.

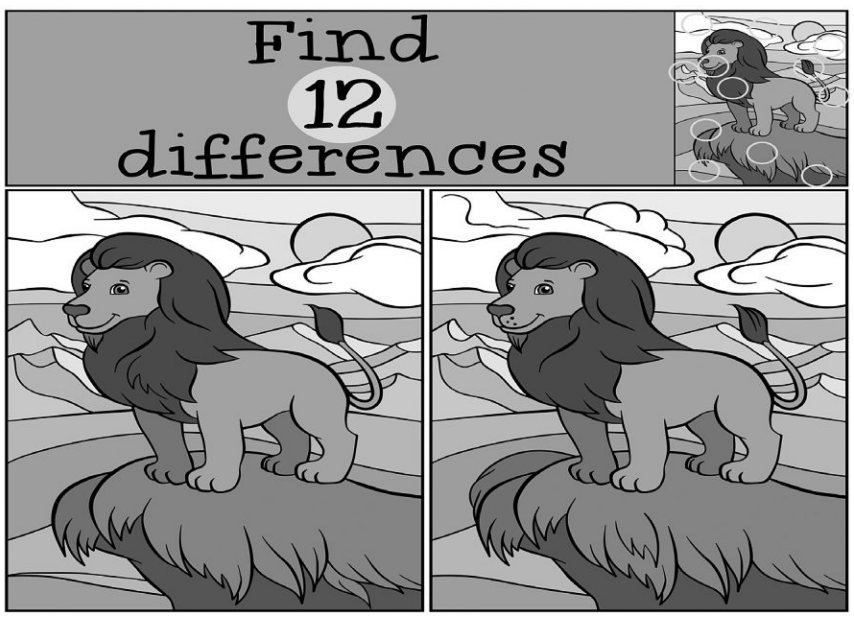


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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

KIDNEWS FUN & GAMES





Hartford Courant
SPORTS
COURANT.COM/SPORTS

NCAA TOURNAMENT SELECTION SUNDAY GLANCE

A look key takeaways from Sunday's announcement of the Field of 68:

■ **No. 1 seeds:** Gonzaga, Arizona, Kansas, Baylor
■ **Region of death:** West
■ **Just made it:** Wyoming, Indiana, Rutgers, Notre Dame
■ **Just missed it:** Dayton, Oklahoma, SMU, Texas A&M

INSIDE
Freshman Chet Holmgren, right, will try to help No. 1 overall seed Gonzaga break through and claim its first NCAA title. **See Page 6**

COMING THURSDAY
Check out our e-edition for a digital-only, 8-page section previewing the men's and women's tournaments.



JED JACOBSOHN/AP

UCONN MEN'S BASKETBALL

Huskies set to take on Aggies as a No. 5 seed

According to Hurley, New Mexico State plays 'a lot like' UConn does

By Shreyas Laddha

Two Connecticut schools made the NCAA Tournament field of 68 on Selection Sunday.

The UConn men's basketball team earned its highest NCAA Tournament seed in coach Dan Hurley's four-season tenure.

The UConn men, watching the Selection Show from the court at Werth Center in Storrs, earned a No. 5 seed in the West Region and will play No. 12 seed New Mexico State on Thursday in the first round at 6:50 p.m. ET at KeyBank Center in Buffalo, New York.

It's the second straight season the Huskies made the tournament, as they earned a seven seed last year.

With a win, UConn would play the winner of Arkansas-Vermont in the second round in Buffalo. Gonzaga is the top seed in the region. If the Huskies were to win their first two games, they would face their Sweet Sixteen opponent in San Francisco.

"It's an exciting day," Hurley said. "Unbelievable sporting event. It's one of the biggest tournaments in sports this week. To be able to go play in Buffalo against a team that plays a lot like us in New Mexico

Turn to Men, *Page 4*



Paige Bueckers, center, and the rest of the UConn women's basketball team learned they will be staying close to home for the NCAA Tournament, landing in the Bridgeport Regional. **JESSICA HILL/AP**

UCONN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Huskies have No. 2 seed, won't travel far

Saturday game vs. No. 15 Mercer; Fairfield to play No. 2 seed Texas

By Dom Amore
Hartford Courant

STORRS — The UConn women's basketball team will be staying close to home for much of the NCAA Tournament. After playing their way up to a No. 2 seed in the Bridgeport Region, the Huskies will host the first two rounds.

They begin play on Saturday against No. 15 seed Mercer (23-6) at Gampel Pavilion. The other game in Storrs is No. 7 UCF (25-3) vs. No. 10 Florida (21-10).

If the Huskies (25-5), the Big East champs, advance to the Sweet 16, they would play the next two rounds at Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport.

"Once we won the Big East Tournament we knew we had improved our chances and made ourselves much more attractive to the committee," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "We improved our chances for a better seed than maybe a month ago. At that point, where we were going didn't matter, you've got to go play teams you've got to play."

The Final Four is April 1 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The championship game is April 3 at 8 p.m. ET. UConn has reached 13 consecutive Final Fours.

Fairfield, winner of the MAAC Tournament, is in the women's tournament for the first time since 2001. The No. 15 seed Stags (25-6) got No. 2 seed Texas (26-6) and will play in Austin, Texas on Friday in the Spokane Region. Stags coach Joe Frager announced in October he's retiring.

"It's a hell of a thing. It's your last year, you decide you're moving on to the next thing and you go to the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 20 years?" Auriemma said. "What better way to wrap up your career, so I'm thrilled for him."

Frager coached Southern Connecticut to the Division II championship in 2007.

Princeton (24-4), the Ivy League winner, coached by former UConn guard Carla Berube, got a No. 11 seed and will begin play vs. No. 6 Kentucky (19-11) on Saturday in Bloomington, Indiana in the Bridgeport Region.

"That's a lot of respect for Carla's team," Auriemma said. "It shows you the kind of schedule they play and what people think of her, her team and Princeton basketball. I'm always rooting for our former players to do well. And over the years, no one has had more success than Carla has from our world here. I spoke to her today and said, 'I hope you're not in our region,' and she

Turn to Women, *Page 5*

NFL

Brady coming back for season 23

'Unfinished business' has veteran changing course on retirement

By Rob Maaddi
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Tom Brady's retirement lasted 40 days.

Brady said Sunday he's returning to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for his 23rd season in the NFL. The seven-time Super Bowl champion announced his decision on Twitter and Instagram, saying he has "unfinished business."

"These past two months I've realized my place is still on the field and not in the stands," Brady tweeted. "That time will come. But it's not now. I love my teammates, and I love my supportive family. They make it all possible. I'm coming back for my 23rd season in Tampa."

Brady led the Buccaneers to a Super Bowl title following the 2020 season and NFC South championship last season. He won six Super Bowls during 20 seasons with the New England Patriots.

The 44-year-old Brady led the NFL in yards passing (5,316), touchdowns (43), completions (485) and attempts (719) in 2021, but the Buccaneers lost at home to the Los Angeles Rams in the divisional round. Brady cited his desire to spend more time with his wife, supermodel Gisele Bundchen, and three children when he decided to walk away from the game on Feb. 1.

But he changed his mind about staying home, a day after attending the Manchester United soccer match against Tottenham Hotspur. Brady sat with the Glazer Family, who own Manchester United and the Buccaneers. Many Hall of Fame players across several sports returned to playing after retiring, including Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and Bob Cousy in the NBA, Brett Favre and Reggie White in the NFL, Guy Lafleur and Mario Lemieux in the NHL. The Buccaneers are hopeful star tight end Rob Gronkowski also will return. Brady convinced his buddy to unretire to join him in Tampa in 2020.

Brady's decision comes days before the NFL free agency period begins. The Bucs have several key players set to hit the open market, including Pro Bowl center Ryan Jensen, running back Leonard Fournette, cornerback Carton Davis, safety Jordan Whitehead, linebacker Jason Pierre-Paul, defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh, Gronkowski and others.

Did you know?

The percentage of teens in high school who drink and drive has decreased by more than half since 1991.



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SPORTS

UP NEXT

UConn MBB: vs. New Mexico State in Buffalo, Thursday, 6:50 p.m.; NCAA Second Round (if necessary) vs. TBD, March 19/20, time TBD; NCAA Sweet 16 (if necessary) vs. TBD, March 24/25, time TBD

UConn WBB: vs. Mercer at Gampel, Saturday, time TBD; NCAA Second Round (if necessary) vs. TBD, March 20/21, time TBD; NCAA Sweet 16 (if necessary) vs. TBD, March 26/27, time TBD

Celtics: at Warriors, Wednesday, 10 p.m.; at Kings, Friday, 10 p.m.; at Nuggets, Sunday, 8 p.m.

Knicks: Trail Blazers, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.; Wizards, Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Jazz, Sunday, 7:30 p.m.

Nets: at Magic, Tuesday, 7 p.m.; Mavericks, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.; Trail Blazers, Friday, 7:30 p.m.

UConn hockey: Hockey East Semifinal vs. Northeastern, Friday, 4 p.m.; Hockey East Final (if necessary) vs. TBD, Saturday, 7 p.m.

Bruins: at Chicago, Tuesday, 8:30 p.m.; at Wild, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.; at Jets, Friday, 8 p.m.

Rangers: Ducks, Tuesday, 7 p.m.; Islanders, Thursday, 7 p.m.; at Lightning, Saturday, 8 p.m.

Wolf Pack: at Syracuse, Wednesday, 7 p.m.; at Laval, Friday, 7 p.m.; at Belleville, Saturday, 7 p.m.

TV/RADIO

BASKETBALL

7:30 p.m.: Nuggets at 76ers. (Live) ESPN

10:05 p.m.: Bucks at Jazz. (Live) ESPN

BOWLING

8 p.m.: WSOB Cheetah Championship Finals. (Live) FS1

SOCCER

4 p.m.: Premier League Crystal Palace vs Manchester City. (Live) USA

SOFTBALL

7 p.m.: Mississippi State at Florida. (Live) SEC

TENNIS

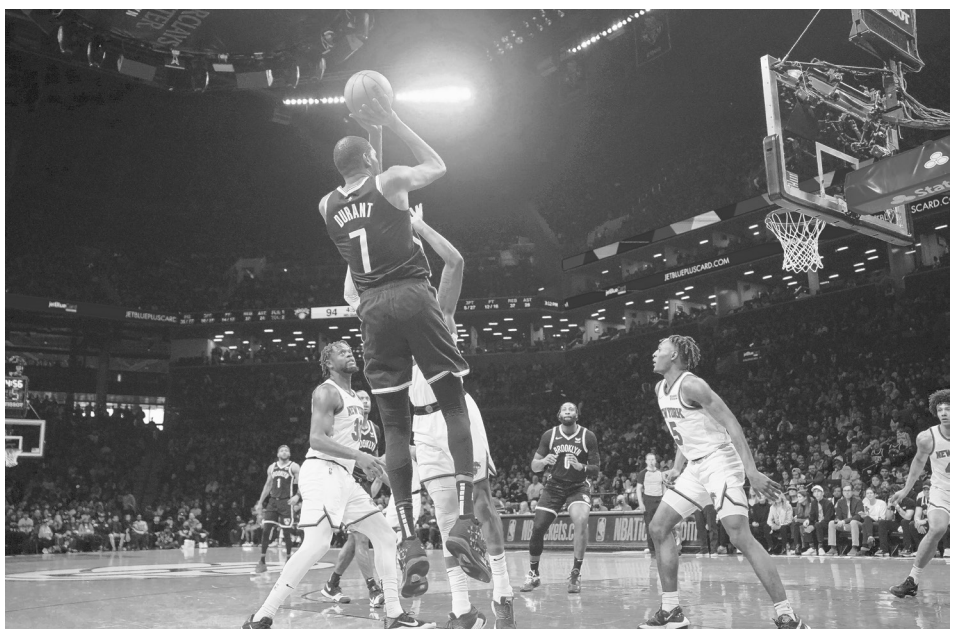
2 p.m.: BNP Paribas Open: ATP 3rd Round, WTA 3rd Round. (Live) TENNIS

NETS 110, KNICKS 107

Durant puts on a show for Irving

Star nets 53 points with teammate in crowd due to vaccination status

By Brian Mahoney
Associated Press



Nets forward Kevin Durant pulls up for a shot against the Knicks on Sunday at the Barclays Center in New York. **SETH WENIG/AP**

NEW YORK — A roar arose inside Barclays Center and for one of the few times Sunday, Kevin Durant had nothing to do with it.

This time, it was Kyrie Irving walking through the crowd to take a seat across the court from the Nets bench, an unusual view for his first home game this season.

Durant said he looked over at teammate Andre Drummond on the free-throw line and they smiled.

"Yo, like this is unreal," Durant said, describing their exchange. "Like, I've never seen nothing like this before."

He then gave Irving a sensational show.

Durant scored a season-high 53 points, making the tiebreaking 3-pointer, and Brooklyn beat the New York Knicks 110-107.

Durant's 3-pointer snapped a 103-all tie with 56 seconds remaining. He added four more free throws to keep the Nets ahead, finishing one point shy of his career high.

Durant also had nine assists and six rebounds in his 60th career 40-point performance.

"That man's insane," teammate Bruce Brown said. "He makes everything look easy out there."

Irving had a nice view, still unable to play in New York. There is no longer a mandate that spectators be vaccinated against the coronavirus, but there is still one requiring it for someone who works there. Irving has not been vaccinated.

So the star guard had a seat in the stands, just as he did a night earlier to watch his college team, Duke, lose in the ACC championship game. On Sunday, he walked off arm-in-arm with Durant toward the Nets locker room after the game ended.

Durant then spent a good chunk of his postgame interview calling on New York City Mayor Eric Adams to change the mandate, calling it "ridiculous" that unvaccinated people could be in the arena but not play in it.

Drummond had 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Nets, who won their third straight. Brown scored 15 points.

Julius Randle scored 26 points and Evan Fournier had 25 for the Knicks, who finished 3-4 on their road trip. RJ Barrett had 24.

Durant scored 16 points in the first quarter, and Brooklyn was ahead much of the way, but the Knicks rallied to take a 103-101 lead on a Barrett basket. Drummond's dunk tied it before Durant sprinted out to the wing to catch and fire in his fourth 3-pointer of the game. He finished 19 of 37 from the field.

"He's one of the best to ever do it, so it's tough when he gets hot like that," Barrett said. "We did hold our own. It was a close game. We had opportunities. We had chances, but especially the shot he hit with a minute left was a big shot."

It was a two-point game when Irving emerged to walk to his seats with just under 4 ½ minutes remaining in the first half. He walked through the stands from the further tunnel, with some fans chanting "Free Kyrie! Free Kyrie!" as he walked by. He exchanged some hugs at his seat, where he sat maskless.

Obi Toppin returned for the Knicks after missing five games with a strained left hamstring and scored eight points.

Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said rookie Quentin Grimes, out with a right knee injury, was pretty much going at full speed and his next step was to take part in contact portions of practice. He had no update on Derrick Rose, who had a procedure to address a skin infection on his surgically repaired right ankle.

Nets guard Seth Curry was originally listed in the starting lineup but was scratched because of left ankle soreness.

REGIONAL DIGEST

Yale men win Ivy League Tournament, earn NCAA berth

Hartford Courant

Azar Swain scored 23 points to lead the Yale men's basketball team to a 66-64 victory over Princeton in Ivy League Tournament championship game Sunday in Cambridge, Mass.

The Bulldogs earned an NCAA Tournament berth for the sixth time. They last went to the NCAAs in 2019 and were to be the league representative for the canceled 2020 event. The Ivy League canceled its 2020-21 season.

Second-seeded Yale, which led nearly the entire game, was up by nine with a minute left. But Ethan Wright hit a 3-pointer and Jaelin Llewellyn added two more, the final one with 24 seconds remaining, to get the top-seeded Tigers within two after Yale's Bez Mbeng had made a pair of free throws.

After Yale's Isaiah Kelly missed two free throws with 14.4 seconds to go, Llewellyn drove inside and threw a pass that went off the bottom of the backboard and struck him as he went out of bounds with 1.5 seconds left. Yale, which had two 5-second violations in the final minutes, threw a long inbounds pass that Llewellyn intercepted, but his desperation heave wasn't close.

Mbeng had 13 points, 11 rebounds and three steals for Yale (19-11). Tosan Evbuomwan had 20 points, 11 rebounds and five assists to lead Princeton (23-6), which had won eight in a row. Llewellyn scored 18 points.

Wolf Pack fall short on the road: The Hartford Wolf Pack cut a three-goal deficit to one late in the third period but got no closer as the Wilkes-Barre/Stranton Penguins pulled out a 4-2 AHL victory in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Trailing 3-0 in the third, Matt Lorito scored for Hartford with 3:45 to play, and Ty Ronning made it 3-2 with 16 seconds left. Jonathan Gruden then shut the door with an empty-net goal in the final second for the Penguins. Adam Huska stopped 28 of 31 shots for the Wolf Pack, with three saves coming on Penguins breakaway attempts.

UConn baseball's 10-game streak ends at Pepperdine: The UConn baseball team scored three runs in the eighth but came up just short in a 6-5 loss to Pepperdine in Malibu, Calif., ending the Huskies' 10-game winning streak. Ben Huber hit a three-run homer with two outs in the eighth for the Huskies (11-2). Pepperdine (9-6) scored two runs in the sixth and three in the seventh to build a 6-2 lead.

MAVERICKS 95, CELTICS 92

Doncic leads Mavs past Celtics on Garnett's day

By Jimmy Golen
Associated Press

BOSTON — Luka Doncic returned from a hamstring scare to hit a tying 3-pointer with a 1:21 left, and Spencer Dinwiddie made the winner with 9 seconds to play as the Dallas Mavericks spoiled Kevin Garnett's special day by beating the Boston Celtics 95-92 on Sunday.

With Garnett courtside awaiting the postgame ceremony to retire his uniform No. 5, the Mavericks won for the seventh time in eight games and snapped Boston's five-game winning streak.

Doncic, who left in the first half rubbing his left leg, finished with 26 points and eight rebounds. He was called for fouling Marcus Smart on the a potential tying 3-pointer with 5 seconds left, but a review overturned it.

"I think, the 3:30 start, all the parts weren't awake yet. I don't think it was bothering him in the second half," Mavericks coach Jason Kidd said of Doncic. "He loves the stage. There's no stage that's big enough for him. He understands and wants to win. He did a great job of putting this team in a position to win."

Boston coach Ime Udoka said the only explanation he got of the overturned call was: "They just said it wasn't a foul."

The Celtics won the ensuing jump ball, called a timeout and got the ball to Jayson Tatum, who missed an off-balance 3-pointer at the buzzer.

"The first look is a catch-and-shoot, knowing they're going to foul," Udoka said. "He felt he got hit when they reached in there. It might have effected his look."

Tatum had 21 points and 11 rebounds, but made just a pair of baskets in the second half and ended a five-game streak of 30-point performances.

Maxi Kleber had 14 rebounds for Dallas.

"That's the thing about LD, he's competitive," teammate Dorian Finney-Smith said of Doncic. "When he's out there, you're not going to be able to tell he's hurt. He still put up numbers like he did and wasn't even moving as fast as he usually does."

Doncic came up limping late in the first quarter and stayed in the game, rubbing his left hamstring. At the next whistle, he walked off and into the tunnel.

"It was really tight," he said. "I landed and it was a cramp, then the whole leg was tight."

The three-time All-Star returned midway through the second quarter and showed no further ill effects. Doncic is fifth in the NBA in scoring with an average of 28.1 points.

Garnett received a standing ovation when he walked in, and he was honored with video tributes during most breaks. But one of the biggest cheers came early in the fourth quarter, when a ball got stuck on top of the backboard on the basket right next to his seat.



The Mavericks' Luka Doncic pressures the Celtics' Jayson Tatum during Sunday afternoon's game in Boston. **STEVEN SENNE/AP**

A floor crew member came out with a mop and offered it to the Hall of Famer as the crowd rose to its feet to cheer him on.

He declined, smiling. The crew member knocked it loose, then got a hug from Garnett.

BRUINS

Foligno looks back as he approaches milestone

By Julian Benbow
Boston Globe

Longevity milestones have a way of making all the moments from a player's career come rushing back.

As his 1,000th game approaches — likely Tuesday in Chicago — the Boston Bruins' Nick Foligno saw so many of the faces that helped him over his 15 years in the league.

"You think about a lot of people along the way," Foligno said. "It's a weird one because it's your own milestone, but for whatever reason, you start thinking about your family, your friends, the people in the game that have supported you to get to that point. It's something I'm definitely proud of to be able to make an impact this long."

Foligno was just 7 years old when he saw his dad reach the same milestone with the Buffalo Sabres. Like Nick, Mike Foligno played 15 years in the NHL. He spent 10 of them with the Buffalo Sabres. By the time he reached 1,000 games, though, he was making a farewell lap with the Florida Panthers.

Even though Mike Foligno's 1,000th game came in a January loss to the New Jersey Devils, he was honored by the Panthers when the Sabres hosted them at Miami Arena a month later.

Nick was able to see his father be showered with gifts — including a Rolex watch from teammates and two first-class tickets to Hawaii from the regional sports television network. There was a video tribute. Panthers president Bill Torrey presented him with a sterling silver stick.

Nick was in the arena along with his mom, two aunts, and three siblings.

"Had the silver stick at the house," Foligno recalled. "Could barely lift it when I was a kid. Now I can finally hold it."

When Nick reaches the mark, he and his father will be just the second father-son duo to each play 1,000 games after Bobby and Brett Hull. Sitting on 657 games played over 11 seasons, younger brother Marcus Foligno has a chance to make it a trio.

"It's special," Foligno said. "It's something I think my family and I will cherish."

SCOREBOARD

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA
Florida	58	40	13	5	85	243	170
Tampa Bay	58	37	15	6	80	198	170
Toronto	59	37	17	5	79	219	181
Boston	59	36	18	5	77	180	160
Detroit	59	24	28	7	55	170	221
Buffalo	60	20	32	8	48	162	212
Ottawa	58	21	32	5	47	154	189
Montreal	59	16	35	8	40	147	224
METRO.	**GP**	**W**	**L**	**OT**	**PTS**	**GF**	**GA**
Carolina	59	41	13	5	87	198	139
Pittsburgh	60	36	15	9	81	197	160
N.Y. Rangers	59	37	17	5	79	180	154
Washington	60	32	18	10	74	197	169
Columbus	60	30	27	3	63	199	222
N.Y. Islanders	55	23	24	8	54	148	154
New Jersey	59	22	32	5	49	179	208
Philadelphia	59	18	30	11	47	148	206

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA
Colorado	59	41	13	5	87	230	170
St. Louis	59	34	17	8	76	211	165
Minnesota	58	34	20	4	72	218	193
Nashville	59	34	21	4	72	190	166
Dallas	57	32	22	3	67	170	169
Winnipeg	60	27	23	10	64	182	187
Chicago	60	22	30	8	52	161	208
Arizona	58	18	36	4	40	148	210
PACIFIC	**GP**	**W**	**L**	**OT**	**PTS**	**GF**	**GA**
Calgary	58	36	15	7	79	204	140
Los Angeles	60	32	20	8	72	175	171
Edmonton	59	32	23	4	68	193	187
Vegas	61	32	25	4	68	192	183
Vancouver	59	29	23	7	65	172	172
Anaheim	61	27	24	10	64	177	193
San Jose	58	26	25	7	59	154	182
Seattle	61	18	37	6	42	159	220

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

SUNDAY'S RESULTS
Pittsburgh 4, Carolina 2
Buffalo 5, Toronto 2
Winnipeg 4, St. Louis 3, (OT)
Columbus 6, Vegas 4
Montreal 4, Philadelphia 3, (OT)
N.Y. Islanders 5, Anaheim 3
Nashville 6, Minnesota 2
Calgary at Colorado, late
Florida at Los Angeles, late
Tampa Bay at Vancouver, late

MONDAY'S GAME
Arizona at Ottawa, 7:30p.m.

TUESDAY'S GAMES
Anaheim at N.Y. Rangers, 7p.m.
Arizona at Montreal, 7p.m.
Dallas at Toronto, 7p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Washington, 7p.m.
Pittsburgh at Nashville, 8p.m.
Vegas at Winnipeg, 8p.m.
Boston at Chicago, 8:30p.m.
Detroit at Edmonton, 9p.m.
New Jersey at Vancouver, 10p.m.
Colorado at Los Angeles, 10:30p.m.
Florida at San Jose, 10:30p.m.

SATURDAY'S RESULTS
St. Louis 7, Nashville 4
Carolina 3, Philadelphia 1
Boston 3, Arizona 2
New Jersey 2, Anaheim 1(SO)
Chicago 6, Ottawa 3
Calgary 3, Detroit 0
Seattle 4, Montreal 3 (SO)
N.Y. Rangers 7, Dallas 4
San Jose 5, Los Angeles 0
Edmonton 4, Tampa Bay 1

TENNIS

BNP PARIBAS OPEN
At Indian Wells Tennis Garden, Indian Wells, Calif., hardcourt outdoors
MEN'S SINGLES, ROUND OF 64
#6 Matteo Berrettini d. Holger Rune, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.
#7 Andrey Rublev d. Dominik Koepfer, 7-5, 6-4.
Botic van de Zandschulp d. #9 Felix Auger-Aliassime, 7-6(4), 6-7(4), 6-3.
#11 Hubert Hurkacz d. Oscar Otte, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.
#14 Diego Schwatzman d. Emil Ruusuvuori, 5-7, 6-3, 6-3.
#16 Pablo Carreno Busta vs. Jaume Munar, late
#20 Taylor Fritz d. Kamil Majchrzak, 6-1, 6-1.
Steve Johnson d. #22 Aslan Karatsev, 7-6(5), 6-4.
#23 John Isner d. Sam Querrey, 7-6(6), 7-6(2).
Miomir Kecmanovic d. #24 Marin Cilic, 6-7(7), 6-3, 7-6(6).
#28 Frances Tiafoe d. Brandon Nakashima, 6-4, 6-4.
#29 Alex de Minaur d. John Millman, 7-6(4), 6-3.
#30 Lloyd Harris d. Facundo Bagnis, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.
#31 Alexander Bublik d. Andy Murray, 7-6(9), 6-3.
Grigor Dimitrov vs. Jordan Thompson, late

WOMEN'S SINGLES, ROUND OF 64
#21 Veronika Kudermetova d. Naomi Osaka, 6-0, 6-4.
WOMEN'S SINGLES, ROUND OF 32
#3 Iga Swiatek d. #29 Clara Tauson, 6-7(3, 6-2, 6-1.
Petra Martic d. #11 Emma Raducanu, 6-7(3), 6-4, 7-5.
#16Coco Gauff vs. #22Simona Halep, late
#25 Madison Keys d. Alison Riske, 7-6(4), 6-1.
#26 Sorana Cirstea d. Anna Kalinskaya, 5-7, 6-1, 6-0.
#28 Liudmila Samsonova d. Danka Kovinic, 6-4, 7-6(4).
Harriet Dart d. Kaia Kanepi, 7-6(4), 6-3.

ODDS

NBA — **MONDAY**

FAVORITE	LINE	O/U	UNDERDOG
at Cleveland	5	(212)	LA Clippers
at Atlanta	13	(234)	Portland
at Philadelphia	5½	(222)	Denver
Charlotte	8	(231½)	at Okla. City
at San Antonio	off	(off)	Minnesota
at Golden State	12	(225)	Washington
at Utah	off	(off)	Milwaukee
at Sacramento	off	(off)	Chicago
at LA Lakers	off	(off)	Toronto

NHL — **MONDAY**

FAVORITE	LINE	UNDERDOG	LINE
at Ottawa	-120	Arizona	+100

For the latest odds, go to FanDuel Sportsbook, https://sportsbook.fanduel.com/

BASEBALL

SPRING TRAINING SCHEDULE
Times TBA
THURSDAY'S GAMES
Minnesota at Boston, 1:05p.m.
Chi Cubs* at Chi. White Sox*, 4:05p.m.
Chi. White Sox* vs. Chi. Cubs*, 4:05p.m.
Arizona at Colorado, 4:10p.m.

FRIDAY'S GAMES
Houston at St. Louis
Tampa Bay at Boston
Toronto at Baltimore
Philadelphia at Detroit
Minnesota at Atlanta
Miami at Washington
N.Y. Yankees at Pittsburgh
Cincinnati at Cleveland
Colorado at Arizona
LA Angels at Oakland
Seattle at San Diego
Chicago Cubs at San Francisco
Kansas City at Texas
Milwaukee at LA Dodgers
*-split squd games

SATURDAY, MARCH 19
N.Y. Mets at Washington
Detroit at Pittsburgh
Boston at Minnesota
Toronto at Philadelphia
Atlanta at Tampa Bay
Houston at Miami
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore
Arizona at LA Angels
Oakland at Cincinnati
San Diego at Chicago Cubs
LA Dodgers at Seattle
San Francisco at Colorado
Cleveland at Chicago White Sox
Milwaukee at Texas

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC	W	L	PCT	GB
Philadelphia	41	25	.621	—
Boston	41	28	.594	1½
Toronto	37	30	.552	4½
Brooklyn	35	33	.515	7
New York	28	40	.412	14
SOUTHEAST	**W**	**L**	**PCT**	**GB**
Miami	45	24	.652	—
Atlanta	33	34	.493	11
Charlotte	33	35	.485	11½
Washington	29	37	.439	14½
Orlando	18	51	.261	27
CENTRAL	**W**	**L**	**PCT**	**GB**
Milwaukee	42	26	.618	—
Chicago	41	26	.612	½
Cleveland	38	29	.567	3½
Indiana	23	46	.333	19½
Detroit	18	50	.265	24

WESTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTHWEST	W	L	PCT	GB
Memphis	47	22	.681	—
Dallas	42	26	.618	4½
New Orleans	28	40	.412	18½
San Antonio	26	42	.382	20½
Houston	17	51	.250	29½
NORTHWEST	**W**	**L**	**PCT**	**GB**
Utah	42	25	.627	—
Denver	40	28	.588	2½
Minnesota	39	30	.565	4
Portland	26	40	.394	15½
Oklahoma City	20	47	.299	22
PACIFIC	**W**	**L**	**PCT**	**GB**
x-Phoenix	53	14	.791	—
Golden State	46	22	.676	7½
L.A. Clippers	36	34	.514	18½
L.A. Lakers	29	37	.439	23½
Sacramento	24	45	.348	30

x-clinched playoff spot

SUNDAY'S RESULTS
Brooklyn 110, New York 107
L.A. Clippers 106, Detroit 102
Dallas 95, Boston 92
Philadelphia 116, Orlando 114, OT
New Orleans 130, Houston 105
Atlanta 131, Indiana 128
Memphis 125, Oklahoma City 118
L.A. Lakers at Phoenix, late

MONDAY'S GAMES
L.A. Clippers at Cleveland, 7p.m.
Denver at Philadelphia, 7:30p.m.
Portland at Atlanta, 7:30p.m.
Charlotte at Oklahoma City, 8p.m.
Minnesota at San Antonio, 8:30p.m.
Chicago at Sacramento, 10p.m.
Milwaukee at Utah, 10p.m.
Washington at Golden State, 10p.m.
Toronto at L.A. Lakers, 10:30p.m.

SATURDAY'S RESULTS
Chicago 101, Cleveland 91
Indiana 119, San Antonio 108
Minnesota 113, Miami 104
Golden State 122, Milwaukee 109
Toronto 127, Denver 115
Utah 134, Sacramento 125
Portland 127, Washington 118

SOCCER

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER

EASTERN	W	L	T	PT	GF	GA
Columbus	2	0	1	7	9	4
Philadelphia	2	0	1	7	5	2
N.Y. Red Bulls	2	1	0	6	7	3
D.C. United	2	1	0	6	4	2
Atlanta	2	1	0	6	5	5
Chicago	1	0	2	5	2	0
New York City FC	1	1	1	4	4	2
Orlando City	1	1	1	4	3	2
New England	1	1	1	4	5	5
Cincinnati	1	2	0	3	2	7
Toronto FC	0	2	1	1	3	7
Inter Miami CF	0	2	1	1	1	7
Charlotte FC	0	3	0	0	1	6
CF Montréal	0	3	0	0	2	8
WESTERN	**W**	**L**	**T**	**PT**	**GF**	**GA**
Los Angeles FC	2	0	1	7	6	1
Real Salt Lake	2	0	1	7	4	2
Austin FC	2	1	0	6	10	2
Colorado	2	1	0	6	5	3
LA Galaxy	2	1	0	6	4	3
Portland	1	0	2	5	4	3
Minnesota United	1	0	2	5	3	2
FC Dallas	1	1	1	4	3	2
Houston	1	1	1	4	2	2
Nashville	1	1	1	4	2	3
Seattle	1	2	0	3	3	4
Sporting KC	1	2	0	3	2	5
San Jose	0	2	1	1	4	8
Vancouver	0	2	1	1	1	6

Three points for win, one point for tie.

SUNDAY'S RESULTS
Atlanta 2, Charlotte FC 1
Minnesota 1, N.Y. Red Bulls 0

SATURDAY, MARCH 19
Miami at Cincinnati, 1p.m.
Philadelphia at New York City FC, 1p.m.
D.C. United at Toronto FC, 3p.m.
Orlando City at LA Galaxy, 3:30p.m.
CF Montréal at Atlanta, 4p.m.
Sporting Kansas City at Chicago, 6p.m.
New England at Charlotte FC, 7p.m.
San Jose at Minnesota, 8p.m.
Portland at FC Dallas, 8:30p.m.
Colorado at Houston, 8:30p.m.
Nashville at Real Salt Lake, 9:30p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 20
Columbus at New York, 2p.m.
Seattle at Austin FC, 4:30p.m.
Vancouver at Los Angeles FC, 10p.m.

SATURDAY'S RESULTS
New York City FC 4, CF Montréal 1
Columbus 2, Toronto FC 1
Los Angeles FC 2, Miami 0
Seattle 3, LA Galaxy 2
Houston 2, Vancouver 1
Chicago 2, D.C. United 0
Real Salt Lake 3, New England 2
Cincinnati 2, Orlando City 1
Philadelphia 2, San Jose 0
FC Dallas 2, Nashville 0
Colorado 2, Sporting Kansas City 0
Portland 1, Austin FC 0

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

CLUB	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PT
Man City	28	22	3	3	68	18	69
Liverpool	28	20	6	2	73	20	66
Chelsea	28	17	8	3	57	19	59
Arsenal	26	16	3	7	43	29	51
Man United	29	14	8	7	48	40	50
West Ham	29	14	6	9	48	36	48
Wolverhampton	29	14	4	11	29	23	46
Tottenham	27	14	3	10	42	35	45
Aston Villa	28	11	3	14	41	39	36
Southampton	29	8	11	10	36	45	35
Crystal Palace	28	7	12	9	39	38	33
Leicester	26	9	6	11	40	45	33
Brighton	28	7	12	9	26	34	33
Newcastle	28	7	10	11	32	48	31
Brentford	29	8	6	15	32	45	30
Leeds	29	6	8	15	31	65	26
Everton	26	6	4	16	28	47	22
Watford	29	6	4	19	29	55	22
Burnley	27	3	12	12	22	38	21
Norwich	29	4	5	20	18	63	17

SUNDAY'S RESULTS
Chelsea 1, Newcastle 0
Wolverhampton 1, Everton 0
Leeds 2, Norwich 1
Watford 2, Southampton 1
West Ham 2, Aston Villa 1
Arsenal 2, Leicester 0

MONDAY'S MATCH
Crystal Palace vs. Man City, 4p.m.

WEDNESDAY'S MATCHES
Brighton vs. Tottenham, 3:30p.m.
Arsenal vs. Liverpool, 4:15p.m.

THURSDAY'S MATCH
Everton vs. Newcastle, 3:45p.m.

FRIDAY'S MATCHES
Wolverhampton vs. Leeds, 4p.m.
Burnley vs. Southampton, 8p.m. ppd
Man City vs. Brighton, 8p.m. ppd

SATURDAY'S MATCHES
Aston Villa vs. Arsenal, 8:30a.m.
Liverpool vs. Man United, 8p.m. ppd
Newcastle vs. Crystal Palace, ppd

SUNDAY, MARCH 20
Leicester vs. Brentford, 10a.m.
Tottenham vs. West Ham, 12:30p.m.
Watford vs. Everton, ppd

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

SUNDAY MEN'S SCORES
TOURNAMENTS
American Athletic: Championship
Houston 71, Memphis 53
Atlantic 10: Championship
Richmond 64, Davidson 62
Big Ten: Championship
Iowa 75, Purdue 66
Ivy League: Championship
Yale 66, Princeton 64
Southeastern: Championship
Tennessee 65, Texas A&M 50

LATE SATURDAY MEN'S SCORES
Atlantic Coast: Championship
Virginia Tech 82, Duke 67
Big West: Championship
Cal St.-Fullerton 72, Long Beach St. 71
Conference USA: Championship
UAB 82, Louisiana Tech 73
Pacific-12: Championship
Arizona 84, UCLA 76
Southland: Championship
Texas A&M-CC 73, SE Louisiana 65
Western Athletic: Championship
New Mexico St. 66:,Abilene Christian 52

NCAA TOURNEY AUTOMATIC BIDS
Murray St.: Ohio Valley
Longwood: Big South
Loyola Chicago: Missouri Valley
Chattanooga: Southern
Georgia St.: Sun Belt
Jacksonville State: Atlantic Sun-*
Delaware: Colonial Athletic
Wright St.: Horizon League
Bryant: Northeast
South Dakota State: Summit League
Gonzaga: West Coast
Colgate: Patriot League
Vermont: American East
Norfolk St.: Mid-Eastern Athletic
St. Peter's: Metro Atlantic
Kansas: Big 12
Boise St.: Mountain West
Texas Southern: Southwestern Athletic
Villanova: Big East
Akron: Mid-American
Montana State: Big Sky
Virginia Tech: Atlantic Coast
UAB: Conference USA
Arizona: Pac-12
Texas A&M-CC: Southland
New Mexico State: Western Athletic
CS Fullerton: Big West
Yale: Ivy League
Tennessee: Southeastern
Richmond: Atlantic 10
Houston: America Athletic
Iowa: Big Ten
**-Bellarmine ineligible for bid*

SUNDAY WOMEN'S SCORES
TOURNAMENTS
Big 12, Championship
Texas 67, Baylor 58
Colonial Athletic Assn., Championship
Delaware 63, Drexel 59
Northeast, Championship
Mount St. Mary's 60, Bryant 42
Patriot League, Championship
American 65, Bucknell 54
Missouri Valley, Championship
Illinois State 50, Northern Iowa 48
Southland, Championship
Incarnate Word 56, SE Louisiana 52

WOMEN NCAA AUTOMATIC BIDS
Albany: American East
American Uiv.: Patriot League
Belmont: Ohio Valley
Buffalo: Mid-American
Charlotte: Conference USA
Delaware: Colonial Athletic
Fairfield: Metro Atlantic Athletic
Florida Gulf Coast: Atlantic Sun
Gonzaga: West Coast
Hawaii: Big West
Howard: Mid-Eastern Athletic
Illinois State: Missouri Valley
Incarnate Word: Southland
IUPUI: Horizon League
Iowa: Big Ten
Jackson State: Southwestern Athletic
Kentucky: Southeastern
Longwood: Big South
Mercer: Southern
Montana State: Big Sky
Mount St. Mary's: Northeast
NC State: Atlantic Coast
Princeton: Ivy League
South Dakota: Summit League
Stanford: Pac-12
Stephen F. Austin: Western Athletic
Texas: Big 12
Texas-Arlington: Sun Belt
UConn: Big East
UCF: American Athletic
UMass: Atlantic 10
UNLV: Mountain West

AUTO RACING

NASCAR CUP SERIES RUOFF MORTGAGE 500LINEUP
Sunday at Phoenix Raceway, Avondale, Ariz., Lap length: 1.00 miles
(Start position in parentheses)

FP	SP	DRIVER	M	LAP	PT
1	6	Chase Briscoe	F	312	52
2	17	Ross Chastain	C	312	39
3	12	Tyler Reddick	C	312	46
4	1	Ryan Blaney	F	312	43.
5	15	Kurt Busch	T	312	32.
6	16	Kevin Harvick	F	312	42.
7	11	Kyle Busch	T	312	30.
8	10	Joey Logano	F	312	32.
9	23	Daniel Suárez	C	312	28.
10	26	Chris Buescher	F	312	27.
11	19	Chase Elliott	C	312	43.
12	5	Aric Almirola	F	312	25.
13	2	Denny Hamlin	T	312	24.
14	9	Alex Bowman	C	312	29.
15	21	Ty Dillon	C	312	22.
16	25	Cole Custer	F	312	21.
17	28	Justin Haley	C	312	20.
18	3	William Byron	C	312	36.
19	33	Todd Gilliland	F	312	18.
20	29	AJ Allmendinger	C	312	0.
21	13	Austin Dillon	C	311-a	19
22	27	Bubba Wallace	T	311	15.
23	18	Brad Keselowski	F	311	14.
24	8	Austin Cindric	F	311	13.
25	14	Erik Jones	C	311	12.
26	4	Christopher Bell	T	310	16.
27	22	Michael McDowell	F	310	10.
28	36	Ricky Stenhouse Jr	C	310	9.
29	24	Harrison Burton	F	309	8.
30	31	Landon Cassill	C	308	0.
31	32	Cody Ware	F	307	6.
32	35	Garrett Smithley	F	305	5.
33	34	BJ McLeod	F	304	4.
34	7	Kyle Larson	C	239-e,	13.
35	20	Martin Truex Jr	T	219-a	2.
36	30	Corey Lajoie	C	45-a	1

a-accident; e-engine; C-Chevrolet; F-Ford, T-Toyota

Winner's averag speed: 100.336mph.
Time of Race: 3hours, 6minutes, 34 seconds.
Margin of Victory: 0.771seconds.
Caution Flags: 8for 52laps.
Lead Changes: 14among 6drivers.
Lap Leaders: R.Blaney 0-27; K.Larson 28; J.Logano 29-32; C.Briscoe 33-51; W.Byron 52-63; K.Larson 64; R.Blaney 65-121; C.Elliott 122-132; R.Blaney 133-189; C.Elliott 190-224; R.Blaney 225; C.Elliott 226-229; C.Briscoe 230-287; R.Blaney 288; C.Briscoe 289-312
Leaders Summary (Driver, Times Led, Laps Led): R.Blaney, 5times for 143laps; C.Briscoe, 3times for 101laps; C.Elliott, 3times for 50laps; W.Byron, 1time for 12laps; J.Logano, 1time for 4laps; K.Larson, 2times for 2laps.
Wins: K.Larson, 1; A.Cindric, 1; A.Bowman, 1.
Top 16in Points: 1. K.Larson, 113; 2. M.Truex, 107; 3. J.Logano, 104; 4. A.Cindric, 103; 5. Ky.Busch, 102; 6. A.Almirola, 97; 7. C.Elliott, 88; 8. A.Bowman, 80; 9. B.Wallace, 78; 10. A.Dillon, 78; 11. B.Keselowski, 77; 12. Ku.Busch, 77; 13. R.Blaney, 75; 14. C.Briscoe, 74; 15. E.Jones, 74; 16. K.Harvick, 69.
———
NASCAR Driver Rating Formula
A maximum of 150points can be attained in a race.
The formula combines the following categories: Wins, Finishes, Top-15 Finishes, Average Running Position While on Lead Lap, Average Speed Under Green, Fastest Lap, Led Most Laps, Lead-Lap Finish.
WEEKEND WINNERS
Xfinity: Noah Gragson
Trucks: Idle

GOLF

LATE SATURDAY: PGA TOUR THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP
Partial 3rd of 4 rounds, TPC Sawgrass, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., 7,256 yards; Par: 72. Play suspended due to darkness

Anirban Lahiri	67-73—140	-9
Tom Hoge	66-71—137	-8
Harold Varner III	69-69—138	-8
Sebastian Munoz	70-73—143	-7
Paul Casey	70-69—139	-7
Sam Burns	68-69—137	-7
Francesco Molinari	70-73—143	-6
Daniel Berger	67-75—142	-6
Cameron Smith	69-71—140	-6
Doug Ghim	70-70—140	-6
Shane Lowry	73-70—143	-5
Kevin Kisner	68-74—142	-5
Joel Dahmen	70-71—141	-5
Patton Kizzire	68-76—144	-5
Doc Redman	71-70—141	-5
Erik van Rooyen	71-67—138	-5
Tommy Fleetwood	66-73—139	-5
Sergio Garcia	71-71—142	-4
Patrick Reed	73-70—143	-4
Russell Knox	71-71—142	-4
Kramer Hickok	67-75—142	-4
Tyrrell Hatton	70-73—143	-4
Brendan Steele	73-69—142	-4
Russell Henley	69-73—142	-4
Louis Oosthuizen	69-72—141	-4
Justin Thomas	72-69—141	-4
Kevin Streelman	73-71—144	-4
Joaquin Niemann	67-73—140	-4
Taylor Pendrith	68-71—139	-4
Corey Conners	70-69—139	-4
Keith Mitchell	67-72—139	-4
Hank Lebioda	72-70—142	-3
Keegan Bradley	72-71—143	-3
Ian Poulter	73-70—143	-3
Seamus Power	71-71—142	-3
Will Zalatoris	69-71—140	-3
Abraham Ancer	68-71—139	-3
Sam Ryder	69-74—143	-2
Sepp Straka	69-74—143	-2
Jimmy Walker	70-73—143	-2
Chesson Hadley	70-74—144	-2
Jon Rahm	69-72—141	-2
Viktor Hovland	71-73—144	-2
Scott Stallings	71-75—146	-2
Branden Grace	71-72—143	-1
Brian Harman	68-74—142	-1
Dustin Johnson	69-73—142	-1
Jason Kokrak	72-72—144	-1
Adam Hadwin	72-72—144	-1
Sungjae Im	72-72—144	-1
Alex Noren	69-75—144	-1
Adam Long	71-71—142	E
Pat Perez	70-72—142	E
Billy Horschel	74-70—144	E
Peter Malnati	70-75—145	E
Denny McCarthy	70-76—146	E
Brice Garnett	67-76—143	+1
K.H. Lee	70-73—143	+1
Lucas Herbert	70-74—144	+1
Max Homa	72-73—145	+1
Scottie Scheffler	70-76—146	+1
Maverick McNealy	70-76—146	+1
Hayden Buckley	72-71—143	+2
Bubba Watson	73-68—141	+2
Troy Merritt	74-71—145	+2

LEADERBOARD	SC	H
Anirban Lahiri	-9	11
Tom Hoge	-8	9
Harold Varner III	-8	9
Sebastian Munoz	-7	14
Paul Casey	-7	9
Sam Burns	-7	9
Francesco Molinari	-6	15
Daniel Berger	-6	13
Cameron Smith	-6	10
Doug Ghim	-6	10

HONDA LPGA THAILAND
4th of 4 rounds, Pattaya Old Course, Chon Buri, Thailand, 6,576 yards; Par: 72, (x-won on second playoff hole),

262 (-26)	**$240,000**
x-Nanna Koerstz Madsen	65-64-66-67
262 (-26)	**$150,488**
Xiyu Lin	64-66-66-66
263 (-25)	**$109,168**
Celine Boutier	65-64-67-67
265 (-23)	**$76,212**
Brooke Henderson	65-67-66-67
Amy Yang	66-69-66-64
266 (-22)	**$51,083**
Hyo Joo Kim	69-65-67-65
Jennifer Kupcho	65-67-67-67
268 (-20)	**$35,428**
Danielle Kang	66-69-67-66
Jeongeun Lee6	66-68-70-64
Hinako Shibuno	67-68-66-67
Atthaya Thitikul	70-67-66-65
269 (-19)	**$24,223**
Nasa Hataoka	63-65-70-71
Esther Henseleit	63-71-70-65
Alison Lee	65-68-66-70
Minjee Lee	69-64-67-69
Lucy Li	67-69-64-69
Leona Maguire	70-66-69-64
Yuka Saso	68-70-69-62
270 (-18)	**$19,279**
Gaby Lopez	68-66-64-72
Patty Tavatanakit	71-66-68-65
271 (-17)	**$16,684**
Perrine Delacour	67-73-64-67
A Lim Kim	67-69-68-67
Su-Hyun Oh	63-65-73-70
So Yeon Ryu	69-66-68-68
Sarah Schmelzel	68-69-65-69
Emma Talley	69-69-67-66
272 (-16)	**$14,294**
Hannah Green	70-65-67-70
Megan Khang	69-67-69-67
273 (-15)	**$13,430**
Lizette Salas	66-70-73-64
274 (-14)	**$12,441**
Pajaree Anannarukarn	68-71-69-66
Matilda Castren	70-68-68-68
Lindsey Weaver-Wright	65-71-67-71
275 (-13)	**$10,146**
Jaravee Boonchant	70-65-71-69
Jeong Eun Lee	68-68-73-66
Stacy Lewis	67-70-71-67
Yu Liu	66-70-72-67
Madelene Sagstrom	68-69-73-65
Jennifer Song	69-71-70-65
Jasmine Suwannapura	73-69-66-67
276 (-12)	**$8,074**
Carlota Ciganda	66-67-71-72
Wei-Ling Hsu	69-70-68-69
Ariya Jutanugarn	74-66-70-66
Giulia Molinaro	71-72-66-67
277 (-11)	**$7,003**
Aditi Ashok	70-72-68-67
Moriya Jutanugarn	70-68-72-67
Kaitlyn Papp	68-70-71-68
278 (-10)	**$6,138**
Min Lee	67-68-71-72
Caroline Masson	68-74-70-66
Chanettee Wannasaen	73-70-66-69
Angel Yin	71-68-71-68
279 (-9)	**$5,191**
Brittany Altomare	68-71-68-72
Chella Choi	71-71-70-67
In Gee Chun	68-69-74-68
Mina Harigae	68-76-69-66
Emily Pedersen	70-67-69-73
Mel Reid	71-71-67-70
280 (-8)	**$4,614**
Jaye Marie Green	74-70-67-69
281 (-7)	**$4,449**
Yealimi Noh	71-69-70-71
283 (-5)	**$4,202**
Marina Alex	71-67-74-71
Albane Valenzuela	71-75-70-67
287 (-1)	**$4,038**
Wichanee Meechai	75-74-68-70
Rina Tatematsu;69-70-74-74;—;287;-1	
290 (+2)	**$3,913**
Na Yeon Choi	73-69-77-71
Prima Thammaraks	71-75-71-73
291 (+3)	**$3,791**
Jenny Coleman	73-73-73-72
292 (+4)	**$3,707**
Ashleigh Buhai	77-70-69-76

MYGOLFLIFE OPEN
4th of 4 rounds, Pecanwood G&CC, Hartbeespoort, South Africa, 7,697 yards; Par 72, (x-won on 2nd playoff hole),

266 (-22)	**(335), $231,765**
x-Pablo Larrazabal	63-65-71-67
266 (-22)	**(173), $117,928**
Adri Arnaus	70-65-64-67
Jordan L. Smith	68-65-68-65
267 (-21)	**(100), $68,166**
George Coetzee	68-66-69-64
268 (-20)	**(84), $57,805**
Richard Sterne	64-65-70-69
269 (-19)	**(60), $40,900**
Ross Fisher	62-70-69-68
Hennie Du Plessis	62-65-70-72
Nacho Elvira	62-66-71-70
270 (-18)	
Romain Langasque	70-65-67-68
Thriston Lawrence	66-67-71-66
271 (-17)	
Marcus Armitage	66-67-69-69
Oliver Bekker	66-69-69-67
Trevor Fisher	65-67-71-68
Tristen Strydom	62-66-74-69

NFL



Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins has agreed to a contract extension to remain in Minnesota. **EMILEE CHINN/AP**

Vikings, Cousins agree to 1-year, $35M contract extension

By Dave Campbell
Associated Press

The Minnesota Vikings have committed to quarterback Kirk Cousins for the next two seasons, banking on further improvement under new head coach Kevin O'Connell.

The Vikings announced their agreement in principle with Cousins on a one-year contract extension Sunday — the latest high-leverage deal that Cousins has successfully bet on himself with and the clearest sign yet that the Vikings aren't interested in a teardown under new management.

According to a person with knowledge of the situation, speaking to Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the terms were not being publicized, Cousins will get $35 million in newly guaranteed money to double the amount of cash the Vikings are on the hook for. He also has a no-trade clause in the new contract, the person said.

The deal includes a $25 million signing bonus spread out over the next four years to flatten the salary cap impact. Factoring in the remaining proration from his last signing bonus and his new 2022 base salary of $15 million, Cousins will now carry a cap hit of slightly more than $31.4 million.

That slashes $14 million off Minnesota's salary cap charges, almost enough for the club to be fully under the $208.2 million figure that kicks in on Wednesday when the new league year officially begins. The Vikings would get there by either releasing or restructuring a contract for another veteran player.

This is the third contract for Cousins with the Vikings in a four-year span. He played his last two seasons with Washington on the franchise tag. With a 59-59-2 career record as a starter, no player has better maximized his value on the market than Cousins, whose earnings over the eight-year period from 2016-23 will top $228 million.

Cousins' previously existing cap number made it imperative for the Vikings to reduce that either by trading him or extending him with a deal that would flatten out his guaranteed money. With new head coach Kevin O'Connell on board, having developed a strong relationship with Cousins as his quarterbacks coach when they were both with Washington in 2017, the Vikings opted to keep Cousins for at least the near future without a replacement in waiting on the roster.

"Kirk was one of the first players I called when I joined the Vikings, and it was immediately clear how much he cares about this organization and about winning," new general manager Kwesi Adofo-Mensah said in a statement distributed by the team. "High level quarterback play is a prerequisite to building a championship team, and we are confident Kirk will continue along that path."

Cousins passed for 4,221 yards and 33 touchdowns in 16 games last season. He threw only seven interceptions for the best interception percentage (1.2) of his career. He missed one game at Green Bay after testing positive for COVID-19. He was one of several key players on the team who were unvaccinated. The Vikings went 8-9 in 2021 and fired general manager Rick Spielman and head coach Mike Zimmer.

IN BRIEF

Hawkeyes top Purdue, win Big 10 tournament

News services

Keegan Murray had 19 points and 11 rebounds as No. 24 Iowa beat No. 9 Purdue 75-66 to win its first Big Ten Tournament championship since 2006 and earn the league's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament on Sunday in Indianapolis.

With the win over the third-seeded Boilermakers, the fifth-seeded Hawkeyes (26-9) became the fourth team in conference history to claim the title by winning four games in four days.

■ Santiago Vescovi scored 17 points and Josiah-Jordan James had 16 points and 10 rebounds to help ninth-ranked Tennessee beat Texas A&M 65-50 in Tampa, Fla., to claim its first SEC tournament title in 43 years. ... No. 18 Houston won the American Athletic Conference Tournament, Richmond won the Atlantic 10 Conference Tournament and Yale won the Ivy League Tournament. ... Georgia hired Florida's Mike White as its coach only three days after firing Tom Crean. White, 45, was 142-88 in seven seasons at Florida. ... Top-ranked South Carolina, defending national champ Stanford, NC State and Louisville are the No. 1 seeds for the NCAA Women's Tournament.

Golf: Nelly Korda announced that she's being treated for a blood clot after seeking advice for swelling in her arm following a workout in Florida on Friday. The 23-year-old was a gold medalist at the Tokyo Olympics and is a seven-time winner on the LPGA Tour. She won four times last season and captured her first major. ... Nanna Koerstz Madsen became the first Danish player to win an LPGA Tour title after a playoff victory at the Honda LPGA Thailand. Both players set a new tournament record of 26-under-par 262.

NFL: The Vikings and QB Kirk Cousins agreed to terms on a one-year extension worth $35 million, ESPN reported. The deal runs through 2023, and adds two voidable years in 2024 and 2025.

MEN'S BASKETBALL
Thursday: vs. New Mexico State, in Buffalo, 6:50 p.m., TNT

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
Saturday: vs. Mercer at Gampel, time, TV TBA

UCONN
COURANT.COM/SPORTS

COVERAGE PRESENTED BY
R&D RISCASSI & DAVIS P.C.
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COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Big East lands six teams in NCAA Tournament

Associated Press

Selection Sunday was a big day for the Big East, with six teams making the cut, including UConn, the No. 5 seed in the West Region.

Villanova, the conference tournament champion, was the top selection, the No. 2 seed in the South. The Wildcats will open against Delaware on Friday in Pittsburgh.

Providence was named the No. 4 seed in the Midwest and will open play Thursday against South Dakota State.

Seton Hall, the No. 8 seed in the South, will open Friday against TCU in San Diego.

Creighton and Marquette were both No. 9 seeds, Marquette in the East opening Thursday against North Carolina, and Creighton in the Midwest opening Thursday against San Diego.

Villanova coach Jay Wright is pursuing a third national title in six tournaments.

"When you go through that experience at Madison Square Garden [in the Big East Tournament] and you're in that excitement and then you come down from that, and people are hyping you up, you've got to get yourself refocused," Wright said. "It concerns me."

"When you go through that experience at Madison Square Garden [in the Biand you're in that excitement and then you come down from that, and people are hyping you up, you've got to get yourself refocused," Wright said. "It concerns me."</p>

On the other side of the bracket from Villanova is No. 1 seed Arizona. Tommy Lloyd has quickly returned Arizona to national prominence after a tumultuous stretch that included NCAA charges tied to a federal corruption investigation into college basketball, the firing of its men's coach and no postseason play.

This new group of Wildcats is working to remove the stain on the program in Lloyd's first season.

"It's a great opportunity for us to go continue to make a mark," Lloyd said Sunday night. "So we're going to attack it. We're not defending anything. We're going for it. We're going to come out and play with a bunch of energy and hopefully a bunch of swag, and have some fun."

Arizona (31-3) will open play Friday in San Diego against the Wright State-Bryant winner. It's part of a quick rise for a program that was unranked in the AP Top 25 to start the season and was picked to finish no better than fourth in the Pac-12.



Villanova's Collin Gillespie drives against Creighton's Trey Alexander in the Big East Tournament championship game Saturday. The Wildcats are the No. 2 seed in the South Region of the NCAA Tournament. **FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP**

UCONN MEN'S BASKETBALL

A look at UConn's 1st-round game vs. New Mexico State

By Shreyas Laddha

The UConn men's basketball team earned a No. 5 seed in the West Region for the 2021 NCAA Tournament and will play No. 12 New Mexico State in the first round on Thursday at 6:50 p.m. on TNT.

The Huskies will travel to Buffalo on Tuesday. If they win, they will play the winner of Arkansas and Vermont. The top seed in the West Region is Gonzaga.

UConn makes its No. 34 appearance in the NCAA tournament. The Huskies have a 23-9 record. In the regular season, UConn finished third in the Big East Conference and lost to conference tournament champions Villanova, 63-60, in the Big East Tournament semifinals on Friday. The Huskies seek to win their fifth national title and first since 2014.

Here's a look at the first-round matchup and key questions the team needs to answer heading into Buffalo.

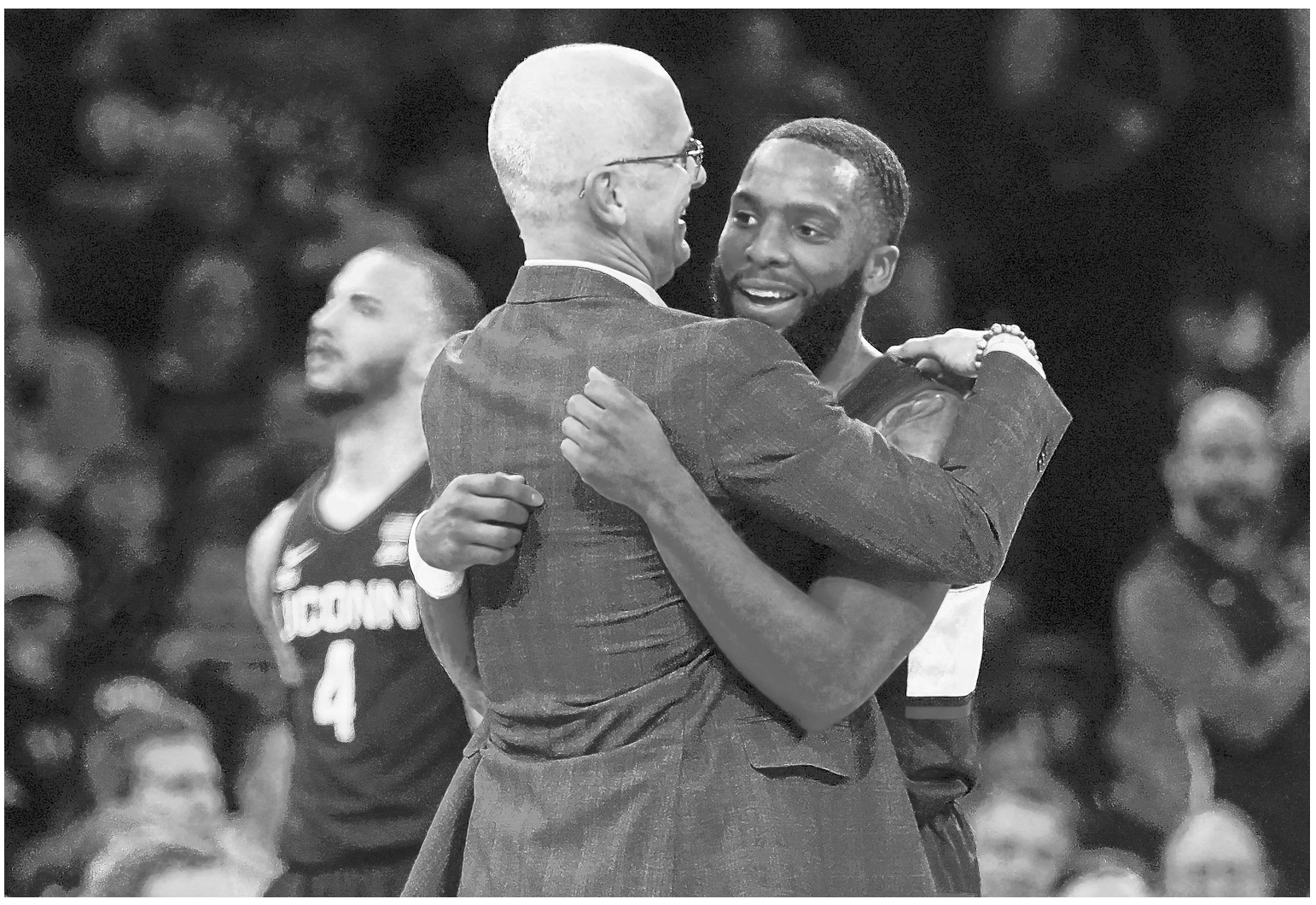
UConn's outlook

First-round opponent: No. 12 New Mexico State.

When: Thursday, 6:50 p.m. ET at KeyBank Center in Buffalo, New York.

Scouting report: New Mexico State went 26-6 this season and won both the regular season and conference tournament in the Western Athletic Conference. The Aggies are an athletic team built around getting looks inside the arc. They rank No. 26 in Division I in two-point percentage with 54.1%, according to KenPom. Luckily for the Huskies, their strength is defending inside the perimeter as they are No. 5 in opponent two-point percentage with 42.8%. New Mexico State struggles to shoot the 3 (33%), so they won't be able to take advantage of UConn's perimeter defense that can struggle at times.

On the defensive side, the Aggies are elite in defending both two-point shots and 3s. Opponents have an effective field goal percentage of 45.5%, ranked No. 20 overall. The Huskies can struggle at getting quality shots off inside the arc. Luckily only one player averages more than one block a game for New Mexico State (Johnny McCants).



UConn coach Dan Hurley, left, hugs R.J. Cole during the Big East Tournament semifinals against Villanova. The Huskies are the No. 5 seed in the West Region of the NCAA Tournament. **FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP**

Although the Huskies' strength is rebounding (especially offensive), they need to focus on gathering defense rebounds.

The Aggies average 35.7 rebounds per game which is No. 29 overall.

Key players for New Mexico State: Teddy Allen (6 feet 6, guard, 19.5 points per game); Jabari Rice (6-4, guard, 12.3 points, 3.4 assists per game and 5.2 rebounds per game).

Around the West Region: Gonzaga is the big test in the region for anybody, as they are the overall top seed. If UConn wins, it will advance to face the winner of Vermont and Arkansas in the second game in Buffalo. The Sweet Sixteen game would be held in San Francisco. Based on matchups, UConn should have a good chance to make it that far.

Key questions for UConn

How will UConn handle a team that plays a similar style to them?

Coach Dan Hurley feels like his team is ready for them and the Big East has helped prepare them for it.

"It will be nice to play a regular game," he said. "A Big East game is not a regular game."

How will the Huskies handle Allen?

"He's just such a skilled player," Hurley said. "He's a matchup problem. You play small on him and he will post you. If you take a big he will drive you. He plays with an edge."

How will the Huskies offense fare against a very good Aggies defense?

UConn tends to struggle to score inside at times as it ranks in the 200s for two-point percentage. The Huskies can't rush their shots on fast breaks and have to make sure they make their easy shots inside. If they struggle inside, you are forcing a team that lacks consistent shooting to make 3s which could spell disaster for them.

How does UConn feel this season compared to last season heading into the tournament?

From Hurley to graduate players Isaiah Whaley and R.J. Cole, the team feels the experience they have gotten over the last two seasons gives them the edge.

"We didn't have that experience with COVID and everything," Cole said. "This is going to be a good experience for us. We just have to play our game and see what we can do out there."

"I feel a lot better," Whaley said. "We had literally no tournament experience last year and nobody has even came close to going to the tournament. Just for us to basically have a full team besides the freshman who have gone to the tournament will play dividends for us."

How will freshman Jordan Hawkins play after coming back from concussion protocol?

Hurley said Hawkins worked out with the team on Sunday and should be available to play on Thursday. For a UConn team that lacks shooting and has an inconsistent bench, he's a pivotal player.

Men

from Page 1

State. They are an athletic, aggressive and attacking team it's going to be a great game and obviously thrilled to be playing in Buffalo."

Yale (19-11) is a No. 14 seed in the East Region and will play No. 3 seed Purdue (27-7) on Friday at Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Bulldogs won a nailbiter, 66-64, against Princeton to win the Ivy League Tournament on Sunday at Lavietes Pavilion at Harvard.

Yale last made the NCAA Tournament in 2019.

The NCAA Tournament begins Tuesday with First Four games in Dayton, Ohio and concludes with the Final Four on April 2 in New Orleans. The championship game is April 4.

Former UConn men's basketball player and Bristol native Steve Pikiell will lead Rutgers men (18-13) in their second straight NCAA Tournament appearance. The No. 11-seeded Scarlett Knights will face fellow 11 seed Notre Dame (22-10) in the First Four on Wednesday at 9:10 p.m. ET to earn a first-round matchup against No. 6 seed Alabama (19-13) in the West Region in San Diego on Friday.

Shreyas Laddha can be reached at sladdha@courant.com or at shre98 on Twitter.



Safety Tip of the Day

Remind your teen drivers that driving under the influence of any intoxicating substance is extremely dangerous and a primary cause of fatal teen accident.

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NCAA TOURNAMENT



UCONN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

A look at UConn's matchup against Mercer

By Dom Amore
Hartford Courant

The No. 2 seed UConn women's basketball team will be making its 33rd consecutive appearance in the NCAA Tournament, beginning with its first-round game against No. 15 seed Mercer on Saturday at Gampel Pavilion.

Located in Macon, Georgia, the Bears have reached the tournament four times in five years. Before turning Division I, the program reached the Division II Final Four in 1985.

Coach Susie Gardner, in her 11th season, having played and coached under Andy Landers at Georgia. In the three recent NCAA Tournament appearances, Mercer has lost to Georgia, Iowa and South Carolina.

Here are some things to know about the bracket:

UConn's outlook

UConn will not have to play outside Connecticut to reach the Final Four, which is unusual for a No. 2 seed.

If the Huskies beat Mercer, and either Florida or Central Florida in the second round, they would move on to Bridgeport for the Sweet 16. Possible opponents there include No. 1-seeded North Carolina State.

Healthy Huskies

Paige Bueckers, UConn's best player, missed nine weeks with a knee injury but returned Feb. 25.

At one time or another, Azzi Fudd, Caroline Ducharme, Christyn Williams, Olivia Nelson-Ododa and Aubrey Griffin all missed a significant amount of time.

All but Griffin have returned now, and the Huskies have the deepest bench, coach Geno Auriemma says, since the late 1990s.

The deep rotation has helped UConn play perpetually aggressive defense in games. Nika Muhl was the big East's defensive player of the year.

"It's funny," Auriemma said. "Most teams are shortening their rotation when the tournament comes around. Ours has been getting bigger."

Hometown bound?

If the Huskies can get back to the Women's Final Four, it would be a homecoming for Bueckers, who player her high school basketball at Hopkins in nearby Minnetonka, Minnesota.

Hot hand

The Huskies hottest player going into the tournament is Williams, the Big East Tournament MVP. She averaged 14.6 points per game during the season.

Big East feast

To Auriemma's delight, four Big East teams made the 68-team field, including Villanova, DePaul and Creighton.

Geno says

"Sometimes it's about individual matchups, sometimes it's about style matchups. You can't pick who you're going to play, but you keep your fingers crossed and hope we get a team that can't handle any of the stuff we're going to do. Or get a team that does stuff we've seen 100 times. I hope we don't get a team that's nothing like what we've seen all year. Matchups are the key. That's everything in this tournament, You run into the wrong team at the wrong time, you're done."

Dom Amore can be reached at damore@courant.com

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL BIG 12 CHAMPIONSHIP

Harmon leads No. 7 Texas past No. 4 Baylor for Big 12 title

By David Smale
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Rori Harmon scored 20 points as No. 7 Texas beat No. 4 Baylor 67-58 on Sunday to win the Big 12 women's basketball tournament championship.

Harmon, a freshman, was named the tournament's most outstanding player after failing to be selected first-team all-conference, which Texas coach Vic Schaefer considered a snub.

"I was just playing for my teammates," Harmon said. "It's really not about awards. I just wanted to win."

Her coach was a little more emotional about the victory.

"I couldn't be more proud of my team," Schaefer said. "I think you saw some really determined kids. They're not intimidated. Going into competition there are so many things you have to do. Being tough isn't just about being stronger or more physical.

"Coming off three games in three days, overtime yesterday, that game was won back in August on the track.

"These kids would not be denied."

The game was projected to be a tussle between the frontcourts, but foul trouble on both sides put a crimp in that plan. Instead, the guards took over.

Texas (26-6) also got 14 points from Joanne Allen-Taylor and 12 from Aaliyah Moore.

"We've been playing incredibly well for the last three months, but we didn't play well today," Baylor coach Nicki Collen said. "I credit a lot of that to Texas. Texas' ball pressure frazzled us all night long. We just didn't get many clean attacks."

Baylor (27-6), which swept the regular-season series by an average of 10 points, was led by Big 12 Player of the Year NaLyssa Smith with 21 points, but she only had seven before the fourth quarter and was still below her season average of 22.3.

Jordan Lewis and Ja'Mee Asberry had 13 points each for Baylor.

The tide changed early in the second quarter when Smith picked up her second foul at the 8:12 mark with the Longhorns up 18-14. She came back in with 5:21 left in the quarter but picked up her third foul a little more than a minute later on the offensive end.

Women

from Page 1

said, 'No disrespect coach, but I hope we're not either.' "

Auriemma still jokes that Berube, who played on the first UConn championship team in 1995, was one of the quietest players he ever coached.

Meanwhile, the Huskies go into the NCAA Tournament on a roll after a regular season of ups and downs and injuries. They now have nine healthy players who have started at one time or another.

"It relieves a lot pressure and stress from everybody," UConn senior guard Evina Westbrook said. "Now we have the whole gang back together. Getting in a groove as a whole, it's been a while. Game by game it's been getting a whole lot better."

UConn has won 11 championships, but with the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting the season, the current Huskies have varying degrees of experience. For the freshman, though, this was their first Selection Sunday.

"It was exciting," UConn freshman guard Azzi Fudd said. "I had never sat and watched it start to finish before. Just knowing that I'm about to be playing in it is something special."

UConn sophomore guard Paige Bueckers, who missed 19 games recovering from a knee injury, has played sparingly, and sometimes tentatively since returning Feb. 25. Auriemma said Bueckers, the reigning national player of the year, has looked better in practice, and her strength and agility is back to pre-injury levels.

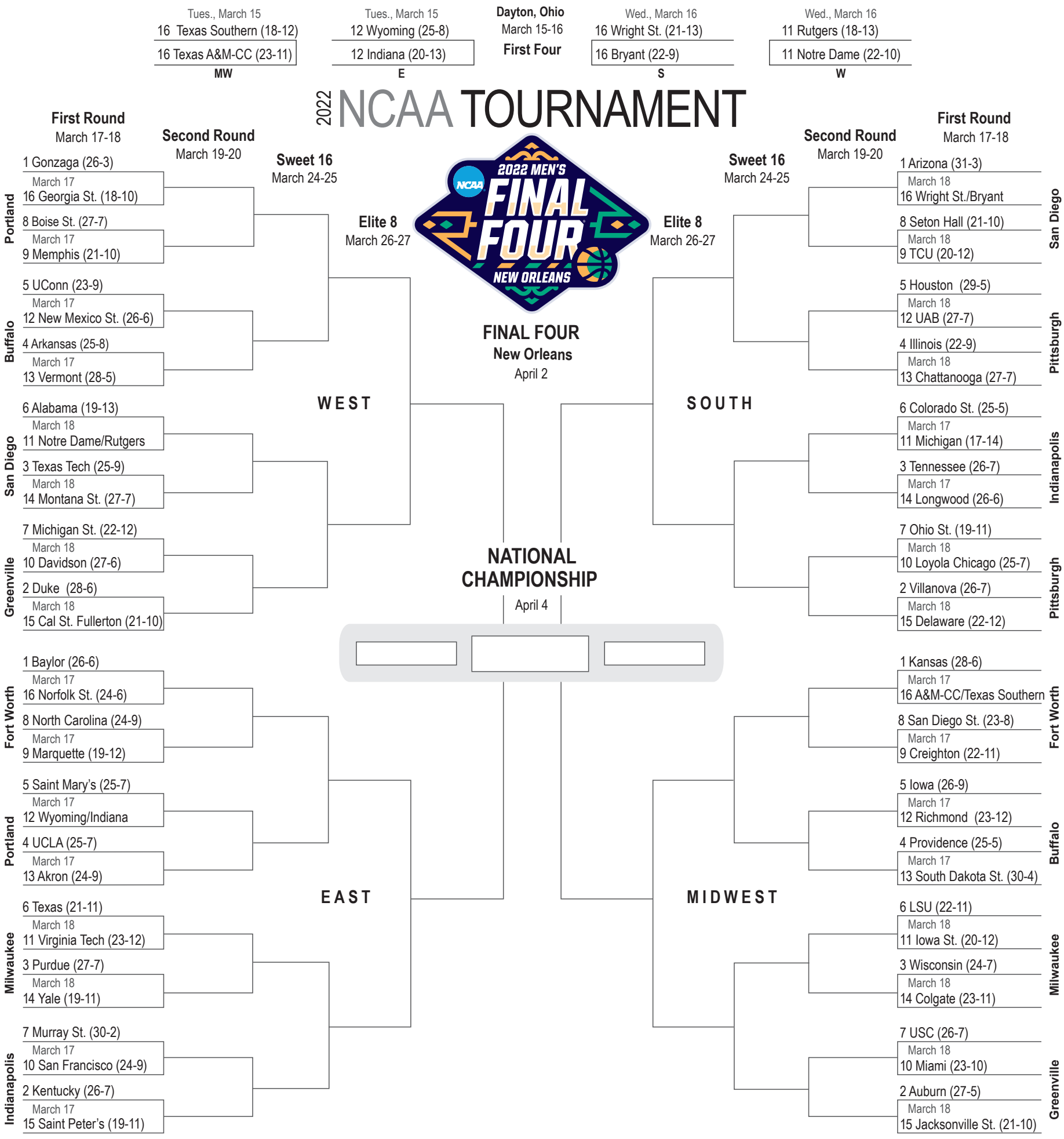
Bueckers has been playing off the bench as Auriemma figures out how best to use her.

"I'm ready and I'm excited to be whatever this team needs me to be in order to win," Bueckers said. "Our team has a whole lot of confidence, everybody knows her role and every one has more confidence from having to step up during the year."

Mercer, coached by Susie Gardner is going to its fourth NCAA Tournament in five years.

Dom Amore can be reached at damore@courant.com.

NCAA TOURNAMENT



BRACKET OVERVIEW

Top dogs: Gonzaga No. 1 overall seed again

Arizona, Kansas, Baylor also No. 1s; Duke checks in as No. 2 in Coach K's final tournament

By Eddie Pells
Associated Press

From the familiar names at the top of the bracket — Gonzaga, Kansas, Baylor — to the well-worn debates all across it — why did Coach K get shipped out West? did somebody do Dayton wrong? — this version of Selection Sunday felt as comfortable as a well-worn Air Jordan.

March Madness is back to normal, or as close to normal as it can get, and that means all those stunning upsets and once-in-a-lifetime game-winners will play out in front of crazy crowds for the first time in three years.

"This was a really special year because we all realized what we missed," said Villanova coach Jay Wright, whose second-seeded team won the Big East title in front of a packed house at Madison Square Garden.

Gonzaga is the overall top seed, with Arizona, Kansas and Baylor joining them on the "1" line for this "seems like old times" NCAA Tournament, the first since 2019 to be played in different cities and different time zone across America. The party lands in New Orleans for the Final Four and championship game April 2-4.

It's a return to the way things used to be after the pandemic scrubbed the tournament completely off the 2020 calendar, then turned the 2021 event into a one-city-fits-all affair -- all the games played in a makeshift bubble in front of limited crowds in and around Indianapolis.

"It's all about staying in the moment and having more fun than anybody in the tournament," said John Calipari, the coach of second-seeded Kentucky.

The best way to have fun, of course, is winning it all. Baylor did that last year in a title-game romp over Gonzaga. Just like last year, both are No. 1 seeds again, with the Zags the 15-4 favorite to win it all, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

Arizona was next at 6-1, followed by Kentucky (15-2) and Baylor (11-1).

Coach Mike Krzyzewski's last tournament before retirement has Duke playing as a No. 2 seed in the West, which also includes Michigan State and Texas Tech. Some thought the selection committee might send Coach K to Chicago and the Midwest as a farewell gift, of sorts. Instead, the road to his 13th Final Four would include a trip to San Francisco and a potential meeting with Mark Few's Bulldogs.



Gonzaga's Julian Strawther celebrates during the second half against Saint Mary's during the final of the West Coast Conference Tournament on Tuesday in Las Vegas. The Zags again are the NCAA Tournament's top overall seed and are looking to win their first title. **JOHN LOCHER/AP**

It's one thing to face a tough bracket, quite another not to be in it at all. Dayton, Oklahoma, SMU and Texas A&M were the "first four out," meaning there's still a glimmer of hope for them if a team must make a late withdrawal due to COVID-19.

Xavier wasn't even on that list, which went down as one of the evening's biggest snubs, per Dick Vitale, the national treasure who was forced to spell things out on a white board — not shout about it — while he rests his vocal cords after cancer treatments.

Dayton would have been in were it not for an upset in its Atlantic 10 conference tournament. Richmond slipped past Davidson for the title, and while Davidson made the field, Dayton did not.

"Our committee really liked Dayton," said selection committee chair Tom Burnett. "They were deserving of consideration, but unfortunately, they ended up on the 'first four out' list."

Teams that just slipped in included No. 12 seeds Wyoming and Indiana, who will square off in the First Four. Rutgers and Notre Dame were the other last two teams in, while Michigan was seeded 11th, as well.

The Fighting Irish, Hoosiers and Wolverines are among the nation-leading nine teams to make it from the Big Ten. That's the same number as last season, but the conference only moved one team to the second weekend. The Big East, Big 12 and Southeastern Conference placed six teams each.

NATIONAL SPORTS REPORT

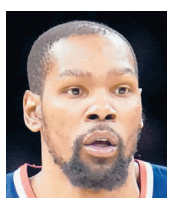
SHORTS

Twins acquire RHP Gray from Reds



The Twins took their first significant step toward restocking their starting pitching, acquiring right-hander Sonny Gray in a trade with the Reds on Sunday. The Reds included minor league right-hander Francis Peguero in the deal for Twins pitching prospect Chase Petty, who was their first-round draft pick last year. The 32-year-old Gray, a two-time All-Star, went 7-9 with a 4.19 ERA and 155 strikeouts over 135 ⅓ innings in 26 starts last season. Over nine years in the majors, Gray has a career record of 82-72 with a 3.61 ERA. Since 2014, he's tied for eighth among right-handers in baseball with 204 starts. Gray will slot right in at the top of Twins' rotation, which was ravaged last year by the trade of José Berríos and the elbow injury to Kenta Maeda that will keep him out for most or all of 2022. Michael Pineda became a free agent and could re-sign. Otherwise, behind Gray, the Twins have Bailey Ober and Joe Ryan coming off promising rookie seasons, Randy Dobnak recovering from an injury-spoiled 2021 and reclamation project Dylan Bundy, who was signed as a free agent right before the lockout.

Durant scores 53 points in Nets win



Kevin Durant scored a season-high 53 points, making the tiebreaking 3-pointer in a sensational show for a crowd that included Kyrie Irving, and the Nets beat the Knicks 110-107 on Sunday at Barclays Center. Durant's 3-pointer snapped a 103-all tie with 56 seconds remaining. He added four more free throws to keep the Nets ahead, finishing one point shy of his career high. Durant also had nine assists and six rebounds in his 60th career 40-point performance. Irving had a nice view while attending his first Nets home game this season, though still unable to play in New York. There's no longer a mandate that spectators are vaccinated against the coronavirus, but there's still one requiring it for someone who works there. Irving hasn't been vaccinated. So the star guard had a seat in the stands, just as he did a night earlier to watch his college team, Duke, lose in the ACC championship game. He walked off arm-in-arm with Durant toward the Nets locker room after the game ended. Andre Drummond had 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Nets, who won their third straight.

Spectator heckles Osaka during loss



Rattled by a derogatory shout from a spectator, four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka went on to lose 6-0, 6-4 to Veronika Kudermetova of Russia in the second round of the BNP Paribas Open on Saturday night in Indian Wells, California. Osaka trailed in the first set when a woman in the stands shouted, "Osaka, you suck." The Japanese star approached the chair umpire to ask that something be done. But the umpire explained that she didn't know who it was and couldn't take any action. "I didn't hear what the lady said because I really so focus on my game ..." Kudermetova said. "But after that moment, I saw that Naomi, she started to cry." Afterward, the 24-year-old Osaka spoke to the crowd with tears streaming down her face. "To be honest, I've gotten heckled before, like it didn't really bother me, but heckled here," she said, her voice trailing off. "I watched a video of Venus and Serena (Williams) getting heckled here (in 2001), if you've never watched it you should." Osaka has said she struggled with depression. She withdrew from last year's French Open to tend to her mental health. *—AP*

AUTO RACING

Parity promise still delivering

In 1st Next Gen season, Briscoe 4th winner in 4 NASCAR races

By David Brandt
Associated Press



Chase Briscoe, driving the No. 14 Chevrolet, earned his first career NASCAR Cup Series victory Sunday at Phoenix Raceway. **DARRYL WEBB/AP**

AVONDALE, Ariz. — Chase Briscoe jumped out of his car and was obviously emotional, kneeling by his No. 14 for a few seconds before a couple voice cracks during his postrace television interview.

The 27-year-old Briscoe took his lumps last season as a NASCAR Cup Series rookie. Now, he's a winner.

"It's unbelievable — I was crying the whole last lap," Briscoe said.

Briscoe raced to his first Cup Series victory, executing two great restarts over the final 20 laps to pull away from Ross Chastain and Tyler Reddick on Sunday at Phoenix Raceway. Briscoe's childhood idol was NASCAR legend Tony Stewart and the Indiana native now drives the No. 14 car for Stewart-Haas Racing.

Briscoe channelled some of Stewart's late-race moxie during an intense battle between three drivers who had never won in the Cup Series. It's more evidence of the parity across the series in the Next Gen cars, with four drivers winning the first four races this season.

Chastain and Reddick — both driving Chevrolets — made things interesting over the final laps but Briscoe's Ford was simply too strong. On the final restart with four laps left, the 27-year-old Briscoe started on the inside, dipped low on the dogleg apron, and was able to hold off the rest of the field.

Briscoe was one of the top drivers in the Xfinity Series in 2019 and 2020 before getting the invitation from Stewart-Haas Racing to take over the No. 14. He had just three top 10s as a rookie and finished 23rd in the season standings. He got off to a good start this season with a third-place finish at Daytona in February.

Now, a victory.

Even though he didn't get the win, it was a breakthrough for Chastain's TrackHouse Racing team. Chastain credited crew chief Phil Surgen for providing him with a car that was comfortable running up front.

"He gave me exactly what I needed," Chastain said.

"We came up one spot short. But I'm so happy."

Reddick's been among the fastest drivers in the Cup Series all season but fell just short of his first win. He battled leg numbness in the Next Gen car over the first few weeks but didn't appear to have any problems Sunday.

Reddick had two straight top 10 finishes after finishing seventh at Las Vegas last week.

Ryan Blaney started on the pole and dominated the first half of the race, winning the second stage after leading 138 of the first 185 laps.

Blaney settled for fourth.

Kurt Busch was fifth.

Kyle Larson won the series championship last year after a fall victory at Phoenix, but engine trouble ended his day early. He finished 34th. It was the end of a frustrating day for Larson, who qualified seventh but had to move to the rear of the starting grid because of unapproved steering wheel changes.

Harrison Burton (unapproved adjustments) and Ricky Stenhouse Jr. (engine) also started from the back.

Busch takes plunge

One of the hot topics before the race was how much drivers would use the 110-foot wide apron on Phoenix Raceway's dogleg turn.

Most said they would wait to see how others fared with the Next Gen car. The waiting didn't take long: Kyle Busch plunged down onto the apron on the opening few laps, picking up some spots in the process. From that point forward, it was business as usual with several cars on the apron, particularly on restarts.

Harvick top 10, again

Veteran Kevin Harvick — who has won nine times in Phoenix — couldn't find victory lane Sunday. But he did finish in sixth place, which was his 18th straight top 10 at the track.

That tied Richard Petty and Dale Earnhardt for the most top 10s in a row at one track.

Odds and ends

There was a planned competition caution at Lap 25, which was about halfway through the first stage. Hamlin, Blaney, Ricky Stenhouse Jr. and Michael McDowell were all penalized for speeding on pit road during the caution. ... William Byron won stage one, which was 60 laps. It was his ninth career stage win. ... Martin Truex Jr., who won last season's Phoenix spring race, finished 35th after a flat tire caused him to smack the wall in Turn 2. ... The final restart in each of the four Cup races this season has come with four or fewer laps remaining. ... Briscoe is the Cup Series' 200th winner.

Up next

Now that the annual three-week West Coast swing is over, the series moves back across the country to Atlanta Motor Speedway next weekend.

GOLF PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP

At Sawgrass, there's light at the end of the tunnel

By Doug Ferguson
Associated Press

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — The longest week at The Players Championship moved closer to a conclusion Sunday without much clarity amid ever-changing names in the chase.

Anirban Lahiri of India finished off more than 12 hours of action at the TPC Sawgrass with a two-putt birdie from 30 feet on the par-5 11th hole to reach 9-under par.

Moments earlier, Harold Varner III hooded a wedge with so much side spin that it raced left across the ninth green and settled inches away for a tap-in birdie. Three short blasts of the horn sounded, not in celebration of Varner's shot but to signal the end of the day due to darkness.

Tom Hoge finished out the ninth hole by making a 25-foot birdie putt that pulled the Pebble Beach winner within one shot of Lahiri.

Right behind was Sam Burns, whose heroics toward the end of the second round Sunday — a 75-foot eagle putt on the 16th and an 18-foot par putt on the last hole — gave him a 3-under 69 and a share of the 36-hole lead with Hoge.

One more day, and still a long way to go.

Hoge opened with a 66 on Thursday with Lahiri one shot behind. Because of rain that saturated the Stadium Course, they didn't hit another shot until their second round began Sunday morning. Both played 27 holes.

The third round was to finish Monday morning, followed by the final round in pursuit of the $3.6 million payoff to the winner, along with three-year exemptions to the Masters, U.S. Open and British Open.

The Stadium Course is renowned a Pete Dye specialty that doesn't favor any one style of play, and that much was evident going into the final day of this marathon finish.

None of the leading six players, all separated by two shots, have ever won a major. Paul Casey has the most experience in pressure situations with his Ryder Cup experience. He was two behind and facing a 5-foot par putt as he tries to extend his amazing streak without a bogey at Sawgrass to 43 holes. Casey began the championship with a triple bogey.

Lahiri and Varner have never won on the PGA Tour. Hoge collected his first win last month at Pebble. Burns has won twice in the last year and is part of the class of young Americans. Also at 7 under was Sebastian Munoz of Colombia with one PGA Tour title.

Sixteen players were within four shots of the lead, a group that included the resurgent former British Open champ Francesco Molinari and his successor holding the claret jug, Shane Lowry, whose round was highlighted by an ace on the island-green 17th.

Doug Ghim, at 6-under par, was holding his own despite getting the short end. He was the only player among the top 15 after 36 holes who had the late-early start times and faced the worst of the fickle weather, mainly the 35 mph wind on Saturday.

Lahiri and his side of the draw weren't entirely off the hook. They arrived to Sawgrass at dark and temperatures at 35 degrees, and most of their second round w as played in bitterly cold temperatures.

Sunday at TPC Sawgrass typically decides the winner. This time it was all about who got to keep playing into Monday evening.

Rory McIlroy and Scottie Scheffler can count themselves among the fortunate. They finished the second round Saturday at 2-over 146 and appeared certain to miss the cut. Not so fast, they'll be back Monday.

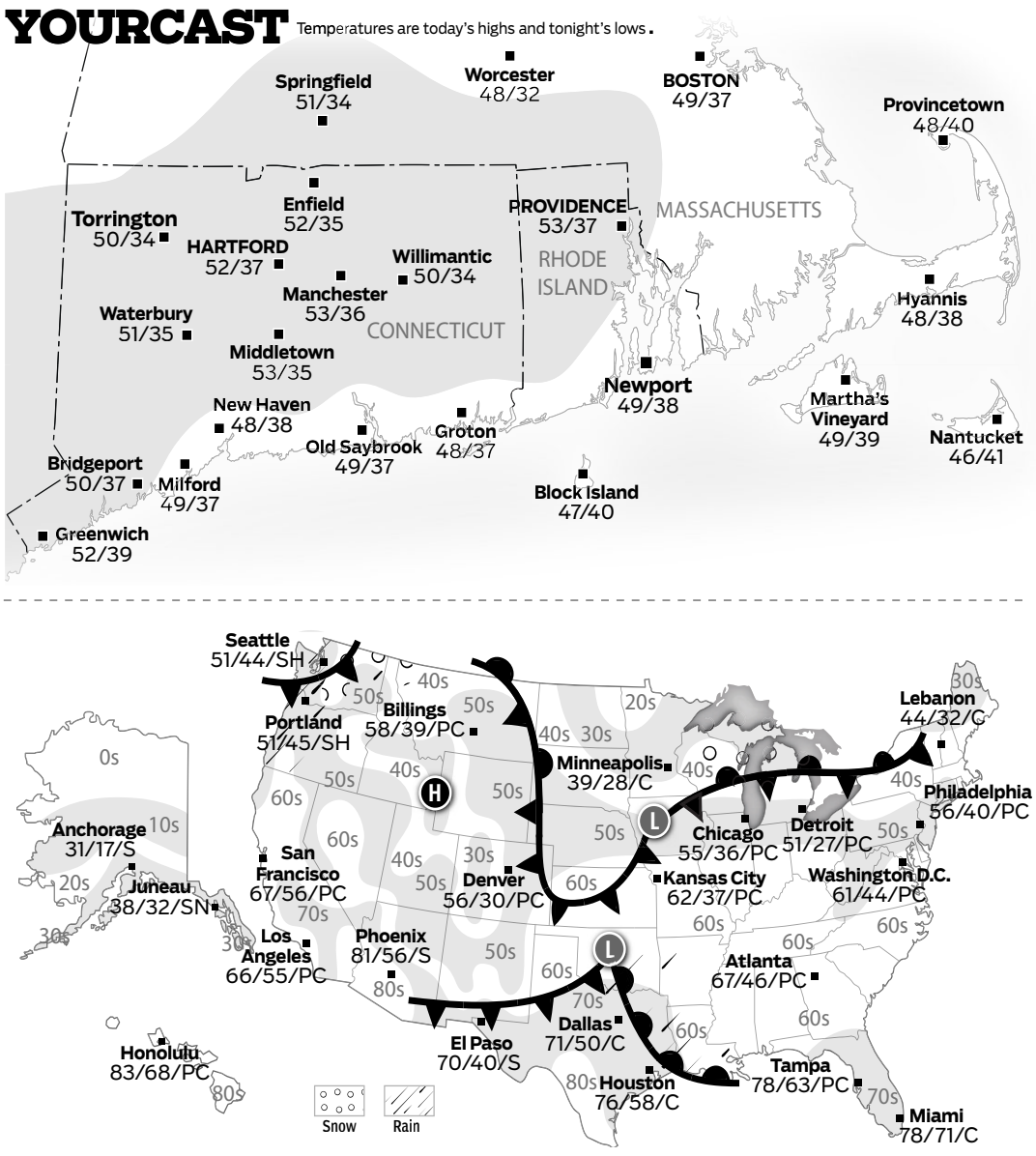
WEATHER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
SUNRISE NOON SUNSET	SUNRISE NOON SUNSET	SUNRISE NOON SUNSET	SUNRISE NOON SUNSET	SUNRISE NOON SUNSET
Sunshine with a few fair weather clouds, turning milder. Southwest wind at 5 to 10 mph.	Thickening cloudiness, pleasant.	Partly sunny and mild.	Mostly cloudy, a chance for a shower or two.	Partly sunny and very mild.
HIGH 52° LOW 37°	HIGH 59° LOW 38°	HIGH 58° LOW 39°	HIGH 64° LOW 43°	HIGH 69° LOW 46°

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YOURCAST

Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



OUTLOOK

After a very breezy and chilly day on Sunday, temperatures will moderate on Monday into the upper 40s and the low to mid-50s, along with a mostly sunny sky. The wind will be rather light as compared to this past weekend. Temperatures will be above normal for this week and for the most part it should be dry. There could be a shower or two on Thursday. Friday should be the mildest day of the week with highs in the 60s to near 70 degrees. A weak frontal system could produce some showers late Friday night, then they appear to be likely on Saturday and perhaps Saturday evening.

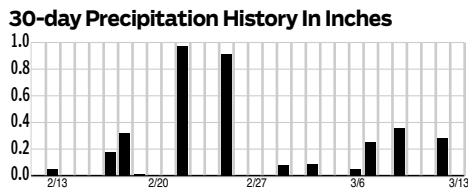
-Gary Lessor

ALMANAC

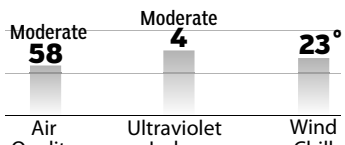
Precipitation In Inches	Total	Normal
Yesterday (by 7 p.m.)	Trace	0.12
Month to date	1.11	1.61
Total this year	7.42	8.02
Snowfall In Inches		
Yesterday (by 4 p.m.)	Trace	0.4
Total this year	31.5	46.5

Precipitation, temperature at Windsor Locks

30-day Precipitation History In Inches



Air Quality Forecast For Today



	Today	Tomorrow
Sunrise	7:05 a.m.	7:03 a.m.
Sunset	6:55 p.m.	6:56 p.m.
Moonrise	3:03 p.m.	4:09 p.m.
Moonset	5:36 a.m.	6:09 a.m.

Moon Phase

Full	Last	New	First
Mar 18	Mar 25	Apr 1	Apr 9

Tides	High	Low	Temp.
N.L. State Pier	7:50 a.m.	1:31 a.m.	40°
	8:03 p.m.	2:10 p.m.	
Saybrook Jetty	9:01 a.m.	2:24 a.m.	41°
	9:14 p.m.	3:03 p.m.	
Connecticut River at Portland	11:44 a.m. 11:57 p.m.	6:10 a.m. 6:49 p.m.	
Madison	9:04 a.m.	2:43 a.m.	41°
	9:30 p.m.	3:19 p.m.	
New Haven	9:24 a.m.	3:07 a.m.	39°
	9:50 p.m.	3:43 p.m.	
Stamford	9:28 a.m.	3:21 a.m.	40°
	9:54 p.m.	3:57 p.m.	

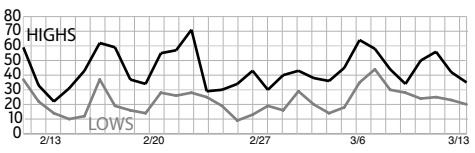
River Stage at Hartford: 7.74 feet at 6:30 p.m.

Boating	L.I. Sound W	L.I. Sound E	B. I. Sound
Weather	MSunny	MSunny	MSunny
Wind	W, 10-15	W, 10-15	W, 10-15
Seas	2 ft.	2-4 ft.	3-5 ft.

Temperature	High	Low
Sunday	35 at 4:00 p.m	20 at 5:31 a.m
Normal for date	46	27
Record for date	79 in 1990	5 in 1941
A year ago	45	27
Range this year	71	-2

Heating Degree Days	Season	Normal	Last Season
For July 1 - March 13	4371	4729	4458

30-day Temperature History



Atmosphere	High	Low
Barometer	30.12 at 1 p.m.	29.53 at 12 a.m.
Dew point	11° at 3 p.m.	4° at 12 a.m.

AROUND THE WORLD

Today's forecast in cities not included in the maps above:

NEW ENGLAND																	
Bangor	44	28	PC	Baltimore	58	39	PC	Nashville	65	42	PC	San Juan	84	74	PC	Budapest	54	27	S
Burlington	43	33	C	Bismarck	39	25	C	New Orleans	71	55	PC	Tucson	78	48	S	Buenos Aires	86	72	PC
Caribou	32	22	C	Boise	59	46	C	New York	51	43	PC					Cairo	62	45	PC
Concord	46	31	PC	Buffalo	49	36	PC	Okla. City	65	42	C	**WORLD**				Cancun	83	72	SH
Montpelier	39	31	C	Charleston	66	50	PC	Omaha	59	29	PC	Amsterdam	55	37	PC	Dubai	98	73	PC
Mt. Wash.	17	13	C	Cincinnati	60	41	PC	Orlando	76	62	PC	Athens	50	37	S	Dublin	50	41	SH
Portland	49	35	PC	Cleveland	54	40	PC	Pittsburgh	52	40	PC	Bangkok	97	79	T	Edinburgh	48	39	SH
Woods Hole	49	37	S	Indianapolis	62	42	PC	Raleigh	63	41	S	Barbados	84	76	C	Helsinki	46	27	S
NATION				Jacksonville	70	53	PC	St. Louis	66	48	PC	Beijing	64	41	C	Hong Kong	82	70	PC
Albany	47	37	PC	Las Vegas	73	52	PC	Salt Lake City	51	35	PC	Beirut	52	44	SH	Istanbul	39	32	C
Albuquerque	61	37	PC	Miami Beach	77	73	PC	San Antonio	81	53	PC	Berlin	54	37	PC	Jerusalem	45	36	SH
Atlantic City	54	38	S	Milwaukee	53	32	PC	San Diego	68	59	PC	Bermuda	67	64	PC	Johannesburg	79	59	SH

Kingston	87	73	T	Stockholm	48	28	S
Lisbon	64	46	SH	Sydney	77	66	PC
London	54	39	C	Tel Aviv	56	44	PC
Madrid	54	50	R	Tokyo	73	52	C
Mexico City	81	52	PC	Toronto	45	34	PC
Milan	54	41	C	Vancouver	48	46	R
Montreal	37	30	SF	Warsaw	48	30	S
Moscow	37	23	SN				
Nassau	78	72	SH				
New Delhi	91	64	S				
Paris	59	48	S				
Prague	54	36	C				
Rio de Janeiro	90	72	T				
Rome	61	41	C				
Seoul	55	37	R				
Singapore	93	75	T				

KEY: **S** Sunny, **C** Cloudy, **PC** Partly Cloudy, **R** Rain, **SH** Showers, **SN** Snow, **SF** Snow Flurries, **T** T-storms

Weather page produced by WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY Weather Center

YANKEES

Boone concerned about impact of Canadian COVID-19 rules

By Mark Didtler
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone is concerned about the roster impact stemming from rules that major league players who aren't vaccinated against the coronavirus won't be allowed to travel into Canada to face the Blue Jays in Toronto.

Canada's government requires a person must have received a second vaccine dose — or one dose of Johnson & Johnson — at least 14 days prior to entry.

"It will be interesting, to say the least, how that situations unfolds," Boone said Sunday. "I think we still have a few guys at least that aren't vaccinated, so we'll be monitoring that situation closely and see how that plays out. But yeah, it's a concern."

The Yankees make their first trip to Toronto for a three-game series that begins May 2 against their AL East rivals.

"The parties have agreed that any player who, as a result of such a governmental regulation is unable or ineligible to play in a championship season game (or games) due to his vaccination status will be ineligible for placement on the COVID-19 IL, but rather may be placed on the restricted list ... without pay or the accrual of credited major league service, during such period of unavailability," according to a letter from players' union deputy general counsel Matt Nussbaum to MLB senior vice president Patrick Houlihan, a copy of which was obtained by Associated Press last week.

The letter says the agreement covering unvaccinated players and travel to Canada expires at the end of the 2022 season.

"It's definitely a personal decision," Boone said. "Now, if it's something that becomes an issue, yeah I would have conversations with guys. But ultimately it's something that I do look at as a personal choice. I understand it's one of those things that's kind of polarized us unfortunately as a nation, as a world."

With the 99-day lockout ending Thursday with a new collective bargaining agreement, spring training will be about two weeks shorter than normal.

"There's urgency that exists with the calendar that's going to create some pressure to want to get ready, and I think that can be a really good thing," Boone said.

Boone was not allowed to talk to players during the lockout, and he called that situation awful. After a deal was reached last Thursday, Boone wasted no time in making contact.

"I kind of sat in my basement that first night and probably talked to 20, 25 guys in that first couple hours just to touch base with them, first and foremost to hear their voice and say 'Hi' and see how they're doing," Boone said. "It was really odd not being able to communicate."

The Yankees' first full-squad workout is Monday, and their initial spring training game is set for Friday against Pittsburgh in Bradenton.

New York signed outfielder Tim Locastro to a one-year major league contract Sunday.



Yankees manager Aaron Boone, speaking to reporters at a spring training news conference Sunday in Tampa, Fla., said it was "odd not being able to communicate" with his players during the lockout. **JOHN RAOUX/AP**

LOCAL SCOREBOARD

SATURDAY'S LATE HIGH SCHOOL RESULT

BOYS HOCKEY

CIAC State Tournaments
Division **I**—Quarterfinals
Lower Bracket
XAVIER 9, HAMDEN 1

MONDAY'S HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

BOYS BASKETBALL

CIAC State Tournaments
Division **I**—Quarterfinals, 7p.m.
Upper **Bracket:** No. 16Wilbur Cross (14-9) at No. 8East Catholic (17-6); No. 5NFA (17-4) vs. No. 4Fairfield Prep (21-3) at Fairfield Warde HS
Lower **Bracket:** No. 10Notre Dame-Fairfield (18-6) at No. 2Notre Dame-West Haven (23-1); No. 6Windsor (19-4) at No. 3Ridgefield (22-2)
Division **III**—Quarterfinals, 7p.m. unless noted
Upper **Bracket:** No. 8Berlin (17-6) vs. No. 1Kolbe Cathedral (20-3) at Fairfield Warde HS, 5p.m.; No. 12Ledyard (14-9) at No. 4Kennedy (20-4)
Lower **Bracket:** No. 7Bassick (17-5) at No. 2St. Bernard (19-4); No. 11New London (15-8) at No. 3Hand (20-4)
Division **V**—Quarterfinals, 7p.m. unless noted
Upper **Bracket:** No. 16Portland (14-10) at No. 8Windham (18-7); No. 20Windsor Locks (11-11) at No. 12Suffield (14-9)
Lower **Bracket:** No. 10Achievement First (18-7) at No. 2SMSA (20-4), 6:30 p.m.; No. 6Capital Prep (17-7) at No. 3 Weaver (16-6), 6p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Class **L**—Semifinals
No. 3Notre Dame-Fairfield (21-3) vs. No. 2Simsbury (21-3) at Maloney HS, Meriden, 6p.m.
No. 5E.O. Smith (19-6) vs. No. 1Newington (24-2) at Plainville HS, 7:45p.m.
Class **M**—Semifinals
No. 3East Hampton (23-2) vs. No. 2Bacon Academy (22-3) at Plainville HS, 6p.m.
No. 5Valley Regional (22-4) at No. 1Holy Cross (25-0) at Maloney HS, Meriden, 7:45p.m.
Class **S**—Semifinals at New Britain HS
No. 15Immaculate (14-9) vs. No. 3 Coventry (18-6), 6p.m.
No. 5Bolton (19-6) vs. No. 1Thomaston (20-4), 7:45p.m.

BOYS HOCKEY

CIAC State Tournaments
Division **III**—Semifinals at Northford Ice Pavilion
No. 3JBWA (20-4) vs. No. 2Newington (19-4), 5p.m.
No. 9Conard (11-10-2) vs. No. 4BBD (15-9), 8p.m.

BOYS SWIMMING

Diving Championships
Class LL at Middletown HS, 5:30p.m.

TUESDAY'S HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

BOYS BASKETBALL

CIAC State Tournaments
Division **II**—Semifinals, 7p.m.
No. 4Wilton (21-4) vs. No. 1Bristol Central (26-0) at Floyd Little AC, New Haven
No. 3Conard (22-3) vs. No. 2Northwest Catholic (24-2) at Enfield HS
Division **IV**—Semifinals at New Britain HS
No. 10Morgan (20-5) vs. No. 6Bloomfield (19-5), 6p.m.
No. 4Granby (20-5) vs. No. 1Cromwell (24-1), 7:45p.m.

BOYS HOCKEY

CIAC State Tournaments
Division **II**—Semifinals at West Haven HS
No. 3Wethersfield (16-6-2) vs. No. 2 Lyman Hall (19-5), 5p.m.
No. 4Sheehan (18-5) vs. No. 1North Haven (22-2), 8p.m.

BOYS SWIMMING

CIAC State Meets at Cornerstone Aquatic, West Hartford
Class L, 1:30p.m.
Class S, 6p.m.

WEDNESDAY'S HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

BOYS BASKETBALL

CIAC State Tournaments
Division **I**—Semifinals, sites/times TBD
Wilbur Cross/East Catholic winner vs. NFA/Fairfield Prep winner
Windsor/Ridgefield winner vs. Notre Dame-Fairfield/Notre Dame-West Haven winner
Division **III**—Semifinals, sites/times TBD
Ledyard/Kennedy winner vs. Berlin/Kolbe Cathedral winner
New London/Hand winner vs. Bassick/St. Bernard winner
Division **V**—Semifinals, sites/times TBD
Windsor Locks/Suffield winner vs. Portland/Windham winner
Capital Prep/Weaver winner vs. Achievement First/SMSA winner

BOYS HOCKEY

CIAC State Tournaments
Division **I**—Semifinals, 6:30p.m.
No. 4New Canaan (15-6-3) vs. No. 1 Notre Dame-West Haven (18-4) at Terry Conners Rink, Stamford
No. 6Darien (14-8-1) vs. No. 2Xavier (13-8-1) at West Haven HS

BOYS SWIMMING

CIAC State Meets at Cornerstone Aquatic, West Hartford
Class LL, 1:30p.m.
Class M, 6p.m.
Saturday's late college results
MEN'S HOCKEY
NCAA Div. III **Tourney**—First Round
BABSON 3, TRINITY 0
ECAC **Tourney**—Quarterfinal (Game 2; best-of-3)
Atlantic Hockey **Tourney**—Quarterfinal (Game 2; best-of-3)
SACRED HEART 3, RIT 1
WOMEN'S HOCKEY
NCAA Division I **Tourney**—Quarterfinals
OHIO STATE 4, QUINNIPIAC 3 (2OT)

BASEBALL

WESLEYAN 9, AUGSBURG 8 (13)
JAMESTOWN 14, WESLEYAN 3 (7)

SOFTBALL

WISCONSIN-LA CROSS 7, WESLEYAN 0

MEN'S TENNIS

SOUTHWESTERN 5, WESLEYAN 4

SUNDAY'S COLLEGE RESULTS

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Ivy League **Tourney**—Final (Boston, Mass.)
YALE 66, PRINCETON 64
MEN'S HOCKEY
Atlantic Hockey **Tourney**—Quarterfinal (Game 3; best-of-3)
RIT 3, SACRED HEART 1

BASEBALL

PEPPERDINE 6, UCONN 5
KANSAS STATE 5-5, CENTRAL 3-2
FAU 11, SACRED HEART 1
FAIRFIELD 7-4, FGCU 6-14
QUINNIPIAC AT GEORGE MASON, CANCELED
WESLEYAN VS. REDLANDS, LATE
WESLEYAN VS. HAMLINE, LATE

SOFTBALL

WESLEYAN 13, WESTERN NEW ENGLAND 2 (5)
WESLEYAN 10, FRAMINGHAM STATE 3
ST. JOSEPH 6, RUTGERS-NEWARK 5
ST. JOSEPH 9, SARAH LAWRENCE 3
UNLV 9, YALE 0
MANHATTAN 12, SACRED HEART 2 (5)
MARSHALL 8, FAIRFIELD 4
QUINNIPIAC VS. INDIANA STATE, LATE

MEN'S LACROSSE

WESLEYAN 22, STEVENS 5
YALE 16, DENVER 13

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

UCONN 20, CORNELL 14
TRINITY 19, BATES 5
WESLEYAN 17, UNION 7
BOSTON COLLEGE 21, YALE 9

MONDAY'S COLLEGE SCHEDULE

BASEBALL

Eastern vs. Wisconsin-Stout, 9a.m.
Montclair State at Trinity (2), 3p.m.
Wesleyan vs. Edgewood (Tucson, Ariz.), 3:30p.m.

SOFTBALL

Eastern vs. SUNY-Fredonia, 10a.m.
Eastern vs. St. Scholastics, 12:15p.m.
Wesleyan vs. Wisconsin-Platteville (Clermont, Fla.), 12:30p.m.
Quinnipiac vs. Bellarmine (Cookeville, Tenn.), 1:30p.m.
Wesleyan vs. SUNY-Cortland (Clermont, Fla.), 3:15p.m.
Quinnipiac vs. Indiana State (Cookeville, Tenn.), 4p.m.
St. Joseph vs. Franklin Pierce (North Myrtle Beach, S.C.), 5:30p.m.

MEN'S LACROSSE

Fairfield at Binghamton, 3p.m.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

SUNY Canton at Eastern, 4p.m.
Big East basketball standings
MEN'S
Team; CONF; CPCT; OVR; PCT
Providence; 14-3; .824; 24-4; .857
Villanova; 16-4; .800; 23-7; .767
UConn; 13-6; .684; 22-8; .733
Creighton; 12-7; .632; 20-10; .667
Seton Hall; 11-8; .579; 20-9; .690
Marquette; 11-8; .579; 19-11; .633
Xavier; 8-11; .421; 18-12; .600
St. John's; 8-11; .421; 16-14; .533
DePaul; 6-14; .300; 15-15; .500
Butler; 6-14; .300; 13-18; .419
Georgetown; 0-19; .000; 6-24; .200

SATURDAY'S LATE RESULTS

Big East **Tourney**—Semifinals (MSG)
VILLANOVA 54, CREIGHTON 48
WOMEN'S (FINAL)
Team; CONF; CPCT; OVR; PCT
UConn; 16-1; .941; 25-5; .833
Villanova; 15-4; .789; 23-8; .742
Creighton; 15-5; .750; 20-9; .690
DePaul; 14-6; .700; 22-10; .688
Marquette; 13-7; .650; 21-10; .677
Seton Hall; 12-8; .600; 19-12; .613
St. John's; 7-12; .368; 12-19; .387
Providence; 6-14; .300; 11-19; .367
Georgetown; 4-15; .211; 10-19; .345
Xavier; 4-16; .200; 9-21; .300
Butler; 0-18; .000; 1-27; .036
Hockey East standings
MEN'S
Team; OGP; OVR; CGP; CONF; CPTS
Northeastern; 36; 24-11-1; 24; 15-8-1; 47
UMass; 33; 19-12-2; 24; 14-8-2; 46
UMass Lowell; 32; 20-9-3; 24; 15-8-1; 46
UConn; 33; 18-15-0; 24; 14-10-0; 41
Boston University; 34; 19-12-3; 24; 13-8-3; 41
Merrimack; 33; 18-14-1; 24; 13-11-0; 41
Providence; 36; 21-13-2; 24; 12-11-1; 38
Boston College; 36; 14-17-5; 24; 9-12-3; 32
New Hampshire; 33; 14-18-1; 24; 8-15-1; 25
Vermont; 34; 8-24-2; 24; 6-16-2; 20
Maine; 32; 7-21-4; 24; 5-17-2; 19

SATURDAY'S LATE RESULTS

Hockey East **Tourney**—Quarterfinals
UMASS 4, PROVIDENCE 2
NORTHEASTERN 3, BOSTON COLLEGE 2